UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EVALUATION OF "AN INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE FOR ESL STUDENTS" AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

BY

BRENDA CUNLIFFE ©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Presented in this study are the results of a summative evaluation of a new sheltered content-based course, "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students," offered for the first time October 12, 1988 - March 29, 1989, by the English Language Program at the University of Alberta. The purpose of the study was to outline origins of the course and to evaluate students' perceptions of course effectiveness. The Stake (1967) model of evaluation guided the design of the study.

An examination of course origins revealed that course development was precipitated by the need for the course identified by both faculty teaching mandatory first year university literature courses and ESL students taking these courses, determined by means of a needs survey. The course was developed within the English for Academic Purposes paradigm and adopted a sheltered content-based model of language instruction to meet ESL students specific academic needs. The course was intended to increase students' knowledge, skills, and confidence to study literature and thus ease the transition from composition courses to first year university literature courses. Outcomes of the new course were also investigated. The data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews.

All students successfully completed the course; there was general agreement that the course was a worthwhile learning experience. Results of the study indicated that closely linking the content materials and language activities to those required in first year literature courses met students' academic needs and

facilitated language achievement. Furthermore, the sheltered segregated homogeneous class was a crucial factor in promoting the self-confidence necessary for students to participate without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. The instructor's empathy with and understanding of ESL students was also important in developing students' confidence to formulate responses to literature.

The interactive activities such as class or group discussions advocated in a reader-centred pedagogy further facilitated understanding, analysis and synthesis and developed students' ability to respond to texts on interpretive and evaluative levels. In addition, the process approach to writing increased students' fluency and developed their ability to prepare critical analysis essays. Problem-solving strategies employed to correct mechanical errors were also productive in helping participants overcome grammatical weaknesses in their writing. A comparison of the objectives of the introductory course with the students' perceptions of course effectiveness suggested that the course may be judged to have been successful in improving students' knowledge, skills, and confidence to study literature at the first year university level.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The English language requirements for the large number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students studying at North American universities vary from institution to institution, but most universities have established Test of English as a Foreign or Second Language (TOEFL) scores to determine entry level English language prerequisites. However, most ESL students, along with their native English speaking peers, regardless of what university they attend and what area they are specializing in, find that they are still required to take a mandatory first year English literature course.

At the University of Alberta, all undergraduate students (excepting those registered in the Faculties of Engineering, Physical Education, Nursing, and Rehabilitation Medicine) complete one six credit, two three credit, or one three credit first year literature courses as a required component of their baccalaureate degree programs (University of Alberta Calendar, 1988/1989). The English Department offers four junior courses: two are full session courses -- English 200 and 210; two are single term courses -- English 270 and 275. Either of the full session courses, or both of the single term courses satisfy the undergraduate English requirement.

Even so, since English 200 is primarily intended for those students who wish to make English literature a subject of concentration, the English Department discourages ESL students from registering in this course. Furthermore, because English 270 involves a close study of selected and traditional verse to introduce students to ways of approaching and critically evaluating poetry (a genre frequently found to be extremely difficult for ESL students) the English Department also advises against ESL students enrolling in this poetry course.

The majority of ESL undergraduate students consequently register in English 210: English Literary Forms. This course provides an introduction to the various genres of English literature in prose and verse, including drama, through a close study of representative authors, both modern and traditional. In addition, one third of the course is devoted to writing to provide formal instruction in writing skills.

Although native English speaking students who specialize in disciplines outside the humanities often experience difficulties in mandatory first year literature courses, such courses have traditionally proven especially problematic for ESL students. The academic performance of ESL students in first year English literature courses at the University of Alberta has long been a source of concern for both ESL students and professors of such courses. Even though these students all have previously taken ESL composition courses, high school classes, or general ESL programs and have adequate mastery of the writing skills and the grammatical elements of English, few have yet acquired the language skills necessary to interpret and respond to literature. They therefore often perform poorly in required first year English literature courses.

Many ESL undergraduates have educational backgrounds in technical and scientific subjects; hence, even the most sophisticated may have relatively little experience in reading English literature. Some students may never have read English literature at all, even that translated into their native languages (Spack, 1985). Moreover, lack of Western cultural background prevents students from relating a text to their personal schema of people and society. That is, literature often reflects culturally specific perspectives which may limit students' comprehension of a text (McKay, 1982). Non-familiarity with literary form poses further problems. Moreover, students must understand literary terminology both to express their responses to texts and to read literary criticism (McKay, 1982). To analyze literature, students must respond to texts on three levels -- the literal, the inferential, and the evaluative -- in order to communicate their insights and responses to what they have read. However, few ESL students have been exposed to the study of literature and therefore lack the ability to interpret a text (Widdowson, 1983).

In her survey of the writing needs of first year undergraduate students, Kroll (1979) indicates that ESL students consider term papers in fields far removed from their areas of specialization the most difficult and challenging writing tasks. She further reports that although the majority of students surveyed had no difficulty with courses in their major fields of study, they believed that mandatory English courses would lower their grade point averages and "cause a lot of mental anguish" (Kroll, 1979, p. 225). The problems experienced by ESL students studying introductory university-level literature courses indicate the need for a new course to ease the transition from composition courses to first year university literature courses.

Background to the Study

The concerns of both faculty and ESL students involved in first year literature courses were brought to the attention of the Director and staff of the English Language Program (ELP) of the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta. Hence, they were aware that many ESL students, including those who had successfully completed advanced levels of the ELP, were experiencing great difficulty in required first year literature courses.

Since no existing course addressed these issues, at the Director's request, "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" was developed by the researcher and a colleague, both instructors for the ELP, 1987-1988. The curriculum of this new course was designed as a sheltered content-based introductory literature course intended to prepare those ESL students who are required to obtain six credits in first year English courses for the study of literature at the university level.

A sheltered content-based course spans diverse areas of language education and includes language instruction for specific purposes. A major subset of this paradigm is English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which involves coordinating second language instruction with the content of one or more academic disciplines (Brinton et al., 1989; Mohan, 1986; Shih, 1986). One model of content-based teaching is sheltered content-based language instruction in which native speakers of the host language are excluded from the course. This model is the one selected for the introductory course. Hence, the course content and language activities are closely linked to those required in first year university literature courses. Furthermore, the course is designed to meet the specific academic needs of a homogeneous segregated group of ESL students preparing for the mandatory study of first year literature courses.

The starting point for development of the new course was to identify problematic areas for ESL students studying English literature. Experts in the area of content-based language instruction emphasize the importance of conducting needs analyses in order to help determine how best to develop or adapt content materials (Brinton et al., 1989). To this end, in August 1987, a needs survey was conducted by means of questionnaires. Questionnaire development, administration, and consequent data analysis are reported fully in Chapter 3. Two questionnaire formats were developed, one for professors teaching first year literature courses and one for ESL students taking such courses. The questionnaires (presented in Appendix A) requested background information to provide a student profile and to determine students' needs. Therefore, all questions related specifically to the study of English literature and not to difficulties experienced in other courses. The compiled results, also presented in Chapter 3, were helpful in determining the objectives of the new introductory course.

Literature concerning the use of literary texts in ESL classrooms was then reviewed to investigate further areas of difficulty for ESL students studying literature and to identify techniques effective in overcoming these problems. Course objectives were then defined and activities were designed to meet these objectives. Thus, the course incorporates current research in second language education with insights gained from the needs survey. The curriculum for "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" was copyrighted in 1988 and offered for the first time during the 1988-1989 Winter Session at the University of Alberta.

The overall objective of the new introductory course was to develop students' informed critical response to literature. In accordance with the content-based paradigm, specific academic content objectives related to the study of English literature are taught concurrently with second language objectives. Global course objectives were as follows:

1. To develop an analytical, disciplined reading of a text
2. To develop the skills necessary to write critical literary analysis essays
3. To formulate an oral response to literature.

An overview of global and intermediate objectives for each of the language components is presented in Figure 1.

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Figure 1: Overview of Course Objectives
(Cunliffe and Begin, 1988, p. 25)

Thus, as shown in Figure 1, the course aims to improve students' abilities to read literary texts, to write critical analysis essays, and to formulate oral responses to literature. Global, intermediate and skill objectives for this new, introductory literature course are as follows:

Reading Objectives

Global Objective:

To develop an analytical, disciplined reading of a text

1. Intermediate Objective: To develop a literal response to a text

Skill Objectives:

1.1 respond thoughtfully and articulately to a text
1.2 relate knowledge of the world with a particular topic
1.3 understand content, significance and emotional appeal of literature
1.4 explore human experience and values through literature

2. Intermediate Objective: To develop an inferential response to a text

Skill Objectives:

2.1 understand the author's purpose for writing
2.2 identify literary form, structure and style
2.3 differentiate between literal and figurative use of language
2.4 understand symbols and images
2.5 identify an author's theme, point of view, mood and tone
2.6 understand satire, irony and humor
2.7 interpret character and effective characterization
2.8 assess the effect of setting on action and characters

3. Intermediate Objective: To develop an evaluative response to a text

Skill Objectives:

3.1 relate literary expression to personal experience
3.2 identify relevant objective evidence to support an opinion
3.3 analyze literature in the context in which it was produced
3.4 analyze the human world as it operates within a text
3.5 identify the author's theme, point of view, mood and tone
3.6 relate current reading to other literature read previously
3.7 assess and evaluate information in terms of projected use
3.8 use appropriate library research skills

Writing Objectives

Global Objective:

To develop the skills necessary to write a critical literary analysis essay

1. Intermediate Objective: To clarify and limit a subject to a workable topic

   Skill Objectives:
   1.1 identify audience and purpose
   1.2 select material from prewriting activities
   1.3 prepare a simple outline
   1.4 determine a form of organization
   1.5 provide objective support
   1.6 supplement where necessary from secondary sources

2. Intermediate Objective: To prepare a critical analysis essay

   Skill Objectives:
   2.1 prepare a point outline
   2.2 formulate a thesis statement
   2.3 write an introduction
   2.4 prepare a first draft
   2.5 use a variety of methods of development
   2.6 incorporate quotations and support from a text
   2.7 incorporate support from secondary sources where applicable
   2.8 write a conclusion

3. Intermediate Objective: To revise and edit essay drafts

   Skill Objectives:
   3.1 improve coherence and unity
   3.2 improve syntax and semantics
   3.3 improve inadequate support or development
   3.4 write a final draft
   3.5 use suitable manuscript form

Oral Response Objectives

Global Objective:

To formulate an oral response to literature

1. Intermediate Objective: To interpret lectures

    Skill Objectives:
    1.1 understand explicitly and implicitly stated information
    1.2 identify the speaker's intent, tone, attitude and bias
    1.3 recognize and understand irony, sarcasm, prejudice and point of view
    1.4 differentiate relevant from irrelevant information
    1.5 interpret language literally and figuratively
    1.6 recognize different registers
    1.7 draw inferences and conclusions
    1.8 understand the organization and development of a speaker's message
    1.9 recognize the cultural connotation of words
    1.10 identify and interpret stress and intonation
    1.11 interpret non-verbal signals
    1.12 take notes

2. Intermediate Objective: To participate in class discussions and presentations

    Skill Objectives:
    2.1 open, develop and conclude an oral response
    2.2 organize material in order of relevance
    2.3 seek clarification and expansion of ideas
    2.4 use literary terminology correctly
    2.5 utilize appropriate idiom
    2.6 select words according to an appropriate register
    2.7 observe classroom etiquette
    2.8 utilize stress and intonation appropriately
    2.9 use adequate non-verbal signals

(Cunliffe and Begin, 1988, pp. 26-28)

The course required the reading and discussion of literary texts such as short stories, novels, poems, and plays. As required by a content-based approach to instruction, the works analyzed were matched closely to the standard university curriculum for introductory literature courses. In addition to developing the ability to respond to texts on the literal, inferential, and evaluative levels, students participated in classroom discussions and presentations; they also learned how to prepare critical analysis essays.

Although an emphasis of the introductory literature course was to develop students' writing skills, the interrelationship of reading and writing was also stressed since the basis of writing about literature is careful readings of a text. Study of texts began with a variety of pre-reading and pre-writing activities designed to promote content schemata and to preview key concepts. As a review of the research on the activities of reading, writing, and responding to literature reveals, these three areas of study, often taught separately, can be viewed as similar processes of "constructing meaning from words, text, prior knowledge, and feelings" (Petrosky, 1982, p. 22). In the course, students read literary texts and their written assignments were analyses of the work studied in class. Topics for their essays were developed through pre-reading activities, class and group discussions, pre-writing activities, and notes so that students benefited from instruction which emphasized the connections between reading literary texts and writing critical analysis essays.

In addition, interactive activities such as class or small group discussions promoted the exchange of ideas and interpretations, helped students' understanding, and assisted them in constructing meaning. Pre-reading and pre-writing activities, particularly important in ESL classrooms, prepared participants to read challenging prose and facilitated students' comprehension. The instructor also provided background information and previewed content of specific texts to prepare students for difficult vocabulary and cultural details which may have limited their understanding. Students were thereby constantly reviewing and revising while building both skills and confidence.

Even though not stated, an implicit objective of the introductory course was to increase students' confidence to study literature. That is, by improving the knowledge and skills to formulate informed responses to literature, the course aimed to increase students' confidence to approach the study of first year literature courses.

Gardner (1985) proposes that second language learning is a "social psychological phenomenon" which relies heavily on the conditions under which it takes place to be successful (p. 2). Although he recognizes the importance of the instructor's role as facilitator as well as the need for a low-anxiety learning environment, Gardner (1985) stresses that students' attitudes influence how successful they will be: "Simply, favourable attitudes tend to cause the experiences to be perceived positively. If, on the other hand, attitudes are negative, the experiences will tend to be perceived unfavourably" (p. 8).

The researcher, who is an experienced ESL instructor as well as the instructor for the new introductory course, has learned through her interaction with ESL students involved in first year literature courses that many students have less than positive experiences. Students have reported negative experiences such as ridicule in front of the class; a professor who began his course by advising all ESL students to withdraw since they were bound for failure; a student whose professor had commented on a written assignment "this is an offense to my sensibilities" and so on. Such experiences have been related to peers and cumulatively promote negative student attitudes which include the widespread belief that ESL students cannot be successful in first year literature courses -- an unfavourable attitude that the introductory course seeks to dispel.

Furthermore, students who have successfully completed their studies in ESL programs often feel afraid and unprepared for the academic course work that lies ahead (Smoke, 1988). There is often good reason for this anxiety. Cummins' research (1981) shows that it takes approximately five to seven years to become proficient in academic English. Thus, a two year ESL program provides a solid foundation for academic study but cannot be expected to make its students as proficient as their native English speaking peers. As Rosenthal (1992) suggests, ESL students often enter mainstream courses facing numerous difficulties. These difficulties might include inadequate preparation for university-level study and non-familiarity with the Western style of education which may be very different from that experienced in their native countries. Moreover, there is "the possibility of discrimination based on accent, skin color, country of origin, as well as differences in culture and behavior" (Rosenthal, 1992, p. 63).

Student fears promote anxiety, "a state of apprehension, a vague fear" (Scovel, 1978, p. 134) toward the learning situation. Such apprehension can cause motivation to decrease and attitudes to turn negative. Scovel (1978) also indicates that low motivation may lead to poorer performance which in turn results in still greater anxiety. Although some experts point out that "facilitating anxiety" can be useful in keeping students alert (Brown, 1987; Scovel, 1978), "debilitating anxiety" negatively affects students' performance both indirectly through worry and self-doubt and directly by reducing participation and creating avoidance of the language. Horowitz and Young (1991) suggest that "facilitating anxiety" is only helpful for very simple learning tasks, but not with more complicated language learning processes.

Through the sheltered content-based model of language instruction utilized in the introductory course, students benefited from the low anxiety learning environment promoted in a homogeneous segregated group of second language learners. Furthermore, the introductory course aimed to increase students' confidence by reducing anxiety through the realization that they have acquired the specific content knowledge and skills to interact effectively in first year literature courses. As Wlodkowski (1985) reports:

> A sense of competence occurs when there is an awareness of personal mastery: the realization by the person that a specified degree of knowledge or level of performance has been attained that is acceptable by personal and/or social standards....When the person knows...how well he can do what he is learning...feelings of competence will occur. (p. 55)

Wlodkowski (1985) further states, "once the person knows with some degree of certainty that he is able or adept at what he has learned, he will feel self-confident" (p. 55).

"Adults learn best in environments which provide trusting relationships, opportunities for interpersonal interactions with both the teacher and other learners, and support and safety for testing new behaviours" (Brundage, 1981, p. 26). Therefore, the focus of the introductory course was to promote a low-anxiety, interactive learning environment where students felt free to express their opinions despite their "deficiencies" or lack of native-speaker proficiency in English. Class and group discussion promoted interpersonal interactions which enabled students to learn from each other. The instructor's role was also crucial to establish a trusting, caring relationship with students, to promote classroom rapport and a sense of camaraderie, and to increase students' self-confidence and language skills while helping them to develop informed responses to literature. As Kidd (1973) states:

> The learner needs to feel at home with himself, sufficiently confident that he can meet the challenge successfully, or he may make no effort at all. He must have enough well-being and enough challenge or he will not dare the pain or discomfort that, in little or large, always accompanies any learning. (p. 120)

Moreover, Rosenthal (1992) reports, "when teaching new concepts we should use several examples and explain concepts step-by-step" (p. 65). The introductory course utilized the process approach to teaching writing and presented the writing of critical analysis essays as a series of small, simple steps to be mastered. Instruction involved the frequent use of models including examples of the students' own writing. Rosenthal (1992) also recommends other teaching techniques which facilitate learning and promote confidence; these techniques include writing clear and legible information on chalkboards, providing handouts and guide sheets, using audio visual materials, speaking clearly and slowly, and providing written instructions.

In accordance with Rosenthal's suggestions, in the introductory course, all major concepts were written on overheads or the chalkboard and were not erased until students had sufficient time to copy down the information. As recommended in the sheltered content-based model of language instruction, students were given handouts and study guides which helped them follow what was being presented in class; these aids could also be used when students were studying at home. Whenever possible, videos, films and other aids were used to reinforce information visually and aurally from lectures or from reading materials. Instruction was given slowly and clearly and written instructions were provided for major assignments. Perhaps most importantly, the instructor was supportive and endeavored to make students feel welcome in the classroom since ESL students "need a lot of courage to ask questions or to participate in discussions" (Rosenthal, 1992, p. 65).

The goal of the introductory course was to realize these conditions which promote increased self-confidence in order to help students to succeed academically, for "adults with positive self-concept and high self-esteem are more responsive to learning and less threatened by learning environments" (Brundage, 1981, p. 26).

Purpose and Research Questions

This study was undertaken to gather information about students' perceptions of the effectiveness of a sheltered content-based course in preparing them for the first year university-level study of literature. The following research question guided the course evaluation and thus the study:

> In terms of the course objectives, how effective is "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" in preparing students for study of first year university-level literature courses as determined by the students' perceived knowledge, skills, and satisfaction?

Two more specific questions served as guides to the study and to analysis of the data. These questions were as follows:

1. How satisfied are the ESL students that the course has given them the skills and knowledge necessary to read, interpret, analyze, and write about literature?
2. What factors contributed to the effectiveness of this course in facilitating students' anticipated ability and confidence in the university-level study of literature?

Significance of the Study

The study has both practical and theoretical significance. Consequently, the results should be of interest to both those who develop ESL curriculum and to those who teach ESL students. As well, this study can be of value to those who work with ESL students (such as counselors, advisors, administrators) since it may provide a better understanding of the difficulties encountered by ESL students studying university-level literature.

In terms of practical considerations, the results of the study may yield insights into the effectiveness of the sheltered content-based approach to second language instruction. It may also identify teaching strategies which are effective in developing ESL students' informed, critical response to literature, and teaching strategies effective in improving students' perceived confidence in the study of English literature. Theoretically, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the use of literature in the ESL classroom.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Dunkin and Biddle (1974) indicate that factors which influence a new curriculum fall into three general categories: presage variables, process variables and product variables. The interaction of these variables is represented in Figure 2.

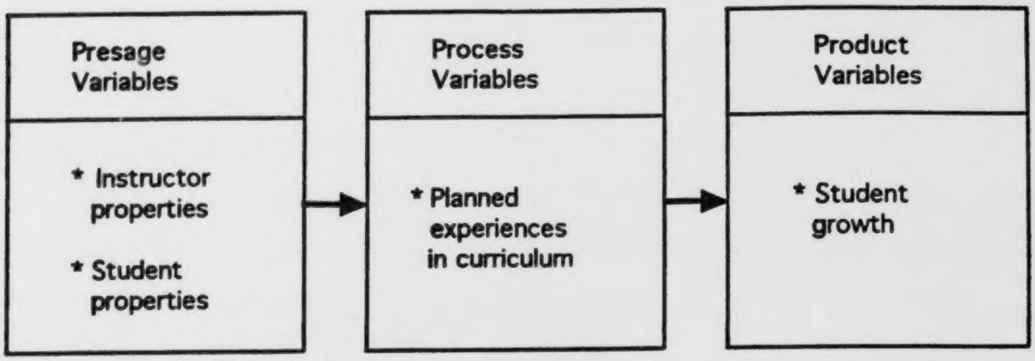
Presage Variables
* Instructor properties
* Student properties
Process Variables
* Planned experiences in curriculum
Product Variables
* Student growth

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for the Study

As shown in Figure 2, presage variables concern the background traits and abilities of instructor and students. Instructor characteristics include training, experience and motivation. Student abilities include level of critical reading and critical writing skills, level of spoken competence, and knowledge of literary form. These presage variables impact upon process variables -- the planned classroom experiences of the introductory literature course. The interaction of presage and process variables is a dynamic process consisting of the numerous interactions between students and teacher, student and student, author and reader, writer and audience, that is, "the succession of engagements which comprise the process of education" (Worthen and Sanders, 1973, p.112). In turn, process variables impact upon product variables resulting in student academic, literary growth. Thus, interactions of the planned experiences of the curriculum with entry level skills improve students' abilities, achievements, and attitudes and are "the consequences of education" (Worthen and Sanders, 1973, p. 112).

This study focuses on product variables in two areas:

1) increase in students' understanding of literary form
2) increase in students' perceived ability and confidence in the university-level study of literature.

Definition of Significant Terms

The following terms are used in this study:

ESL students: Students whose native language is one other than English.

The introductory literature course: "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students," an introductory literature course developed by staff of the English Language Program of the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta. The sheltered content-based course is designed to prepare ESL students for the study of literature at the first year university-level.

First year university-level literature courses: Courses in English literature offered at the junior university-level, usually taken by students in their first year of study.

Instructor: An individual involved in teaching the introductory literature course.

Host language: The language students wish to acquire as their second language. For this study, the host language is English.

Host culture:	The culture of students' country of domicile. For this study, the host culture is North American culture.

Other terms which may have a specialized meaning are defined at appropriate points in the study.

Assumptions and Limitations

A major assumption underlying this study was that the development and implementation of an introductory literature course for students whose second language is English would prepare ESL students for the study of literature at the first year university-level. Furthermore, it was assumed that students taking this introductory course would be able to describe and to reflect upon the learning experience.

The study was delimited to the sample and time periods specified in the design. Caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings of this study to any other ESL students.

Two important factors may be viewed both as limitations and as advantages. The researcher played an integral role in the design and development of this introductory course and was also the instructor for the course being studied and as such had ready access to student perceptions. Care was taken to be objective in gathering the data and reporting the findings.

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 of this thesis provides the introduction, background to the study, statement of purpose, research questions, significance of the study, conceptual framework, definition of significant terms, assumptions and limitations. Chapter 2, a review of related literature, presents three areas: content-based language instruction, teaching English literature to ESL students, and program evaluation. The design, development and methodology of the evaluative study are presented in Chapter 3, as well as a description of the respondents. In Chapter 4, the results of the data analysis are presented. The final chapter, Chapter 5, is the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study, followed by the reference list and appendices.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of the research related to the teaching of English literature to students whose first language is one other than English. In order to provide a framework for the evaluation of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" in terms of current theory in the area of teaching literature, this chapter begins with a review of content-based language instruction. The role of literature in first language programs is then discussed followed by the role of literature in second language programs. The latter is further investigated within the context of the research concerning reading literary texts, writing about literature, and responding orally to literature. The chapter concludes with a review of the research concerning program evaluation.

Content-Based Language Instruction

The paradigm of content-based ESL instruction, also known as Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is perhaps one of the most important paradigms of the last decade. These language teaching approaches which emphasize the mastery of specific content arose from the findings of a committee commissioned by the British government in 1975 that first language instruction should be across all curriculum content areas; that is, "the perspective taken is that of a reciprocal relationship between language and content learning" (Brinton et al., 1989, p. 6).

This cross-curricular approach to first language instruction led to the development of content-based second language instruction intended to prepare ESL students with specific needs to meet their real-life demands. In this paradigm, language experts distinguish between "language learning and using language to learn" (Mohan, 1986, p. 18). Thus, in contemporary communicative second language classrooms, the context of communication is the specific subject matter students need to understand and master.

In order to provide a cross-curricular structure for language teaching, Mohan (1986) suggests that the following characteristics can be identified:

> 1. Develop an organizing framework of language and thinking skills which apply across the curriculum. The organizing framework must help the student to connect work in the language class and the content class.
> 2. Improve communication of subject matter. Communication of subject matter is fundamental to education, and the framework should assist it.
> 3. Find strategies for developing language skills in this general framework. This, of course, is of special importance to the language teacher.
> 4. Find strategies for developing the thinking skills in this general framework. This is of special importance to the content teacher who is interested in not only in conveying information but also in ways of thinking about information. (p.p.18-19)

Within such a framework, "communication of content material can be improved, thinking skills can be developed more easily, and transfer of learning is enhanced" (Mohan, 1986, p. 122). Hence, experts conclude that content-based instruction can facilitate both first and second language development and is "particularly appropriate where learners have specific functional needs in the second language" (Brinton et al., 1989, p. 9).

English for Academic Purposes (EAP), in which second language instruction is linked to the content area of one or more academic disciplines is a major subdivision of ESP courses (Brinton et al., 1989). While general ESL programs provide a good preparation for academic study, many ESL students enter postsecondary education underprepared to deal with the actual academic classwork they encounter (Christison and Krahnke, 1986). Many of these students consequently "fail to reach their potential in academic achievement because their language learning is poorly coordinated with their learning of content or subject matter" (Mohan, 1986, p. 1).

In the content-based paradigm, EAP language objectives must be coordinated with specific academic subject matter to promote the understanding and mastery of specialized content. As Mohan (1986) points out, "any educational approach that considers language learning alone and ignores the learning of subject matter is inadequate to the needs of these learners" (p. 1). Hence, content-based EAP aims to effectively prepare advanced ESL students for the academic course work they will encounter in first year college or university courses by eliminating the artificial separation between language instruction and content instruction which exists in most ESL programs.

Brinton et al. (1985) define content-based instruction at the postsecondary level as "the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills" (p. 2). Consequently, language class activities are specific to the academic content being studied and "are geared to stimulate students to think and learn through the use of the target [host] language" (p. 2). Such an approach requires the integration of the four language skills so that, for example, students respond to authentic readings and lectures and synthesize information from discussion and presentations in preparation for realistic content writing tasks.

The development of content-based courses involves the task of selecting appropriate content materials as well as designing challenging language and content activities. All models of content-based instruction emphasize the authenticity of texts selected (Shih, 1988). Brinton et al.'s (1989) suggestions concerning text selection for content-based courses include the following:

> 1. Content authenticity -- How up to date is the content material?...Does the material give students an opportunity to practise the more extensive type of reading, writing, and listening typically required in content disciplines?
> 2. Task authenticity -- Are the tasks required of students appropriate to the discipline/subject matter? Do they promote critical thinking?
> 3. Difficulty level -- Are the materials appropriate for the proficiency level of students? How heavy is the lexical/syntactic load? Is the length of the text appropriate?
> 4. Accessibility -- Do the students have the necessary background knowledge to engage in the text? Is it culturally accessible? Is the information load appropriate?

> 5. Availability -- What content-specific materials (e.g. readings, audio/videotaped lectures, films) are available for use in this course?
> 6. Textual aids -- Are textual aids (e.g. glosses, study questions, indices) utilized to assist students in their comprehension and retention of the content material?
> 7. Flexibility -- Does the text lend itself to the integration of skills? To information exchange activities? (p. 90)

Program developers must also consider whether they wish to use a content textbook or whether they wish to develop their own content-related materials (Shih, 1988).

Brinton et al. (1989) discuss three main approaches to content-based teaching: theme-based language instruction, adjunct language instruction, and sheltered content instruction. In theme-based language courses subject matter is structured around topics or themes which involve students in readings, lectures, films, oral activities, and writing about a particular topic or topics. Such courses may include a series of independent cultural topics (in practice, this type of theme-based approach is most commonly used in intensive ESL programs) or short courses on a single topic. An example of single topic courses are those offered by UCLA Extension American Language Centre which provides three-week modules on topics such as "The Brain," "Marketing and Advertising," and "The Roles of Men and Women" (Baker et al., 1984). According to Brinton et al. (1989), theme-based language courses are "the most widespread...since they can be implemented within virtually any existing institutional setting, and topics can be selected to match students' interests" (p. 15).

A second form of content-based teaching, adjunct language instruction, entails linking EAP courses or tutorials to specific postsecondary content courses. Students register in both courses and the responsibility for guiding their thinking, understanding, and assignments is shared between the academic content instructor and the EAP instructor (Shih, 1986). The adjunct course requires close cooperation between the content specialist and the EAP instructor as well as the willingness of the EAP instructor to be involved in and to keep pace with the events of the content class. The primary goal of adjunct courses is "to promote the development of academic language skills necessary for success" since many first year university students are "inadequately prepared to deal with the demands of the university environment, particularly with respect to their reading, writing, and study skills" (Brinton et al., 1989, p. 57).

Although adjunct or tutorial courses have been adopted by many universities for native language speakers, for example, a first year composition course at Cornell University which is taught concurrently with an elementary biology course, they have been much more slowly established in ESL programs (Shih, 1986). However, at the UCLA Freshman Summer Program, ESL courses have been linked with introductory courses in the liberal arts and sciences (Brinton et al., 1989). Another example of an adjunct course is a new introductory literature course offered at Okanagan College in British Columbia, where an English literature specialist and an EAP instructor concurrently develop the academic skills necessary for students to successfully complete required first year English courses.

A third approach to content-based second language teaching is sheltered content instruction in which native speakers of the host language are excluded from the course. The exclusion of native speakers helps to ensure that instructor input is adjusted to the students' level and aims to ease students into learning specific academic subject matter in the second language. Krashen (1985) states that typically such courses may be organized around sets of readings on selected topics which provide "narrow input" (p. 73). For the EAP context, Hudson (1991) recommends the use of "well-selected authentic (unmodified in any way) texts" since simplified texts may prohibit the successful development and application of reading skills (p. 84). He further stresses that the language learning process should involve tasks which are authentic to the specialist area and are realistic.

Such sheltered courses are often taught to a homogeneous segregated group of ESL students by a content area specialist who is a native speaker of the host language or by an EAP instructor who also has training in the area of content. In the sheltered environment, students benefit from "the adjustments and simplifications made by native speakers in communication with second language learners, and from a low-anxiety situation" (Brinton et al., 1989, p. 16). Some examples of sheltered programs are the credit courses offered in both French and English at the University of Ottawa such as an introductory psychology course, and the philosophy of science course offered at the Graduate School English Language Centre in Beijing in which students study cross-cultural perspectives in scientific research (Brinton et al., 1989). The sheltered content-based approach is also the one adopted for "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" at the University of Alberta.

Literature in First Language Programs

While literature and composition are generally taught separately, this tradition is not long-standing. English literature was not studied as a distinct subject until the mid-nineteenth century (Horner, 1983). In the eighteenth century, the purpose of English studies was to unite the teaching of classical rhetoric with an understanding of literary culture (Scott, 1980). However, in the nineteenth century, literature became more concerned with the study of interpretive reading, while rhetoric became almost entirely concerned with form and correctness (Corbett, 1983; Horner, 1983).

The reasons for this fragmentation were both socioeconomic and pedagogical (Connors, 1985). Since, in the nineteenth century, previously elite college education was offered to greater numbers of people from various socioeconomic backgrounds and geographical areas, the desire to "set standards of propriety in language" grew (Connors, 1985, p. 65); consequently, grammatical instruction became part of the college curriculum. Faced with large writing classes, nineteenth century English professors were forced to concentrate on the correction of mechanical errors in student papers rather than responding to student papers as genuine communication.

By the twentieth century, although some universities still offered rhetoric as a scholarly subject (often in philosophy departments) many literature professors no longer considered rhetoric a scholarly discipline and thus limited the study of literature to interpretive and evaluative analysis of poetry, drama, and fiction (Connors, 1985). As a result, graduate students and part-time faculty began teaching composition courses which focussed on expository and technical writing; these courses emphasized the avoidance of error as the goal of writing (Connors, 1985; Corbett, 1983; Horner, 1983).

Since the middle of the twentieth century, however, many language educators have advocated moving away from this emphasis on form and correctness to viewing writing as a process rather than a product (Connor, 1987; Raimes, 1983; Santos, 1988). As Connor (1987) states, "the past decade has witnessed a major paradigm shift in composition theory and research: the emphasis has moved from the product to the process of writing" (p. 677). In addition, educators question the role of critical theory in the study of literature (Purves, 1979; Rosenblatt, 1938) and urge reintegration of the study of composition with the study of literature (Miller, 1983; Rubenstein, 1967).

Literature in Second Language Programs

Although literature has often formed a basis for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, contemporary academic ESL instruction focuses on meeting the academic and occupational needs of students. As a result of this emphasis, linguists such as Topping (1968) have argued that literature should be excluded from the ESL curriculum. There are three common arguments against using literature in ESL classrooms. First, because of its structural complexity, its unique use of language, and lack of conformity to standard grammatical rules, literature does little to contribute to an understanding of the grammar of the language. Second, the study of literature does not contribute to students' practical goals of attaining linguistic proficiency. Finally, the particular cultural perspectives reflected in literature are conceptually difficult for students (McKay, 1982).

In contrast, recent research reveals a renewed interest in literature as instructors seek resources that will take students beyond an elementary level of language instruction to a level that will enable them to function more effectively in the target culture (Oster, 1985; Povey, 1967, 1972, 1979, 1984; Spack, 1985; Widdowson, 1975, 1982, 1983). Although it can be argued that students would benefit more by studying texts from their own disciplines than by studying literature, it may also be argued that students who study science and technology suffer from prolonged exposure to too much technical writing which is "notorious for its clumsiness and stylistic infelicity" (Marckwardt, 1978, p. 18). Numerous instructors now believe that the study of literature which promotes "seeing feelingly on the one hand, and skeptically, rationally, on the other" (Oster, 1985, p. 75) should be included in the ESL curriculum since students are "intellectually and emotionally, if not linguistically and culturally," ready to examine literary works (Spack, 1985, p. 704). Some educators have published literary anthologies for ESL students (McKay and Petitt, 1984; Mullen, 1984; Povey, 1984).

According to Povey (1967), the linguistic difficulty of literature has been overstated. In fact, literature can expand all language skills: "literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax" (Povey, 1972, p. 187). Since literature reflects national culture, Sage (1987) argues that a major value of literature is its cultural content. Marckwardt (1978) similarly states that since literature expresses both cultural and human values, its study can promote communication, understanding, and greater tolerance of cultural differences.

In using English literature with Puerto Rican students, Marshall (1979) found that her own appreciation of the text was clarified and her respect for the students' cultural background enhanced as she helped students overcome culturally specific textual details. Hence, literature helped promote a greater tolerance of cultural differences for both teacher and students. Frye (1964) stresses this benefit of studying literature:

> So you may ask what is the use of studying the world of imagination where anything is possible and anything can be assumed, where there are no rights or wrongs and all arguments are equally good. One of the most obvious uses, I think, is its encouragement of tolerance. (p. 77)

Widdowson (1975) indicates that although literary language does not depend on conventional grammar for its meaning, literature models a wider range of communicative strategies than any other ESL teaching component. As Hymes (1972) points out, there are two levels of linguistic knowledge: usage and use. According to this definition, usage involves a knowledge of linguistic rules, whereas use entails knowing how to use these rules for effective communication. Since some literature presents language in discourse where setting and relationships are defined, and illustrates a particular dialect or register embedded within a social context, it is effective in developing an awareness of language use (Widdowson, 1975).

Furthermore, Widdowson (1982) scorns those who eliminate literature from the ESL classroom, yet utilize textbook fiction to display language usage: "Textbooks are full of fiction, Mr and Mrs Brown, son David, daughter Mary pursuing the dreary round of their diurnal life" (p. 205). He explains that students do not view such texts as meaningful use of language. He suggests that literature should be viewed as discourse and the study of literature as "an inquiry into the way a language is used to express a reality other than that expressed by conventional means" (p. 80). Since the students' goal is to learn how the host language is used for communication, the study of literature can develop "a sharper awareness of the communicative resources of the language being learned" (Widdowson, 1975, p. 83).

Because literature usually implies as much as it states, the study of literature demands that students develop their abilities to interpret discourse:

> By leaving some things unexplained, imaginative literature differs rather consistently from discursive prose. The essayist characteristically wants to supply as much detail as possible so that his meanings are direct and clear. But the writer of literature leaves much for the reader to conjecture and imagine. (Irmscher, 1975, p. 108)

These interpretive skills are valuable to ESL students because they can be applied to "a range of language uses, both literary and non-literary which they encounter inside and outside the learning situation" (Widdowson, 1975, p. 84).

Also, it has been argued that reading for interest and pleasure, where students focus on the writer's message, contributes to the development of writing ability (Krashen, 1984). Salvatori's (1983) research on the correlations between reading and writing patterns suggests that her students' improved ability to manipulate syntactic structures was the result of their "increased ability to engage in, and to be reflexive about, the reading of highly complex texts" (p. 659). According to Rubinstein (1967), the writing process can facilitate the reading process since writing is "not only a record of understanding, but an act of understanding" (p. 24). Hence, in ESL classrooms, the activity of composing, once artificially separated from the activity of reading, can justifiably be taught in conjunction with the teaching of literature (Spack, 1985).

Reading Literary Texts

In recent years, a radical change in thinking about response to literature has taken place. In the early twentieth century, literary scholars assumed that there was only one correct way to read a literary text (Purves, 1979). However, Rosenblatt (1938) explored the interactive relationship between a reader and a text. She suggests that reading is an interactive process in which both the reader and the text contribute to meaning. That is, readers take an active role, bringing to bear personal views, experience with language and with culture, and expectations of reading to construct meaning and analyze ideas.

Even so, not until approximately thirty years later did researchers and theorists recognize Rosenblatt's (1938) subjective perspective: that individual responses to literary works could be as valid as formal, authoritative techniques of literary interpretation (Bleich, 1980). Furthermore, sharing interpretations facilitates critical response which involves understanding, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating in order to respond to a text on literal, inferential and evaluative levels. Such cognitive skills are facilitated by the discussion and exchange of interpretations; this is particularly important for ESL students who may feel that a text is too difficult for them (Cunliffe and Begin, 1988). Widdowson (1978) regards teaching "not as a reaction to a text but as interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text" (p. 74). This interaction occurs on both the linguistic and the conceptual levels and necessitates the ability to interact with a text by decoding the language and comprehending the concepts presented.

The interaction of reader and text is the basic tenet of schema theory (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). Reading is thus viewed as a communicative activity that can be compared with conversation since both processes involve the interaction of one participant who has information to give, and another who receives that information. Consequently, schema theorists advocate reader-centred pedagogy and focus on an interactive processes orientation to the complex, cognitive process of reading (Fagan, 1987). Recognition of the importance of schemata is certainly not new: "Kant claimed as long ago as 1781, new information, new concepts, new ideas can have meaning only when they can be related to something the individual already knows" (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983, p. 553). Even so, the study of second language reading comprehension has traditionally emphasized the language to be comprehended rather than the reader's experiential knowledge.

Numerous studies investigating ESL reading comprehension have been conducted (Block, 1986; Carrell, 1985, 1987; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983; Mosenthal, 1984; Perkins, 1983). Such studies indicate that four skills are necessary for inferencing and semantic constructivity: prior knowledge, logical skills, systematic integration, and active processing. Thus, it may be concluded that ESL educators must recognize the importance of the reader's contribution to the reading process:

> A fundamental assumption of schema-theoretic approaches to language comprehension is that spoken or written text does not in itself carry meaning. Rather, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct the intended meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge. (Perkins, 1983, p. 20)

Block's (1986) findings regarding the comprehension strategies of second language readers indicate that ESL students do not appear to use comprehension strategies which are different from those of native English speakers. As a result, she questions research which suggests that reading ability in a second language is largely a function of second language proficiency. That is, she questions the view that language skill development is linear, moving from lower level letter and word level skills to high level, cognitive skills. Since her study suggests that the development of comprehension strategies does not appear to depend on language specific features, Block (1986) argues that high level strategies developed in the first language can be transferred to the second language and can operate alongside lower processing strategies. She concludes, "readers of the second language seem to bring with them the knowledge of the reading process and of approaches to task and then apply these to specific language features in the text" (p. 485).

The classroom implications of such research are that instructors should examine what their students can already do before deciding to eliminate literature from the ESL curriculum. The mechanical ability to recognize written symbols is merely one aspect of the process of reading; to decode a written message, good readers must apply interpretive skills. As Sage (1987) indicates, the benefits of studying literature clearly make it appropriate reading matter for ESL students. Literature can be taught as "a way of exploring understanding, and reflecting on the strategies by which readers...generate meanings in the act of reading" (Salvatori, 1983, p. 659).

In addition to interpretive skills, another important factor to consider in teaching reading comprehension of literary texts is that of teaching text structure. As Carrell (1985) reports, research has shown that teaching various aspects of text structure can facilitate ESL reading. Two major genre types are used to define texts: narrative and exposition. Narrative is generally equated with story grammars or story schema and differs from exposition in that it is not concerned with representing static events but with events that occur over time (Fagan, 1987).

Carrell's (1985) study regarding the teaching of text structure to facilitate reading demonstrates that when story grammar (a set of hierarchical rules for providing a description of story in terms of its key parts) is used to guide comprehension and recall, both are facilitated. Other empirical studies show the valuable effect of teaching text structure (Carrell, 1987; Geva, 1983; Mosenthal, 1984). Studies involving training on discourse types all show that reading comprehension can be significantly improved by teaching text structure. Even so, as Carrell (1985) explains, "teaching the prototypical patterns of different texts would be inappropriate unless such instruction occurs in conjunction with helping students, in a number of ways, to acquire meaning from text" (p. 742).

In her more recent study, Carrell (1987) examines the effects on ESL reading comprehension of both culture-specific content schemata and formal schemata, as well as potential interaction between them. She defines content schemata as the background knowledge a reader brings to a text, "knowledge relative to the content domain of the text," whereas a formal schema is "knowledge relative to the formal, rhetorical organizational structures of different types of text" (p. 461). The overall finding of this study is that both content and form are of primary importance; each plays a significant, but different, role in reading comprehension. She suggests that in the ESL reading classroom, content is of primary importance: "when either form of content is unfamiliar, unfamiliar content poses more difficulties than unfamiliar form" (p. 476). Gatbonton and Tucker (1971) also stress the importance of providing background information and previewing content to maximize comprehension of literary texts. Similarly, Sage (1987) emphasizes preparing students for difficult vocabulary or for culturally specific details which may limit their ability to comprehend a text.

Since literature reflects some aspects of the human and social values of a particular culture, reading literature exposes ESL students to unfamiliar cultural content. However, as McKay (1982) indicates, "an examination of a foreign culture through literature may increase their understanding of that culture" (p. 531). Literary texts dealing with relevant themes with which students can identify facilitate their understanding of an unfamiliar culture, but as McKay (1982) additionally states, "a text which is extremely difficult on either a linguistic or a cultural level will have few benefits" (p. 531). Hence, themes such as personal growth and development presented in short stories or novellas, where the text is relatively short and the number of characters is relatively small, are recommended for ESL classrooms (McKay, 1982; Sage, 1987; Spack, 1985).

Early (1960) describes growth in literary appreciation as moving through three stages: "unconscious delight," "self conscious appreciation," and "conscious delight." The first stage of "unconscious delight" experienced by children listening to stories moves into a stage of "self conscious appreciation" as students become aware of the forms and conventions of literature. When reading, students first recognize the techniques they have studied, then begin to understand and analyze the effect the author's technique has on the work. Mature readers are often able to experience "conscious delight" during reading by being aware of aspects of style and form while enjoying the story, poem or play. Thus, a goal of reading instruction is to encourage students to move through these three stages to develop informed critical response to literary texts (Cunliffe and Begin, 1988).

Writing about Literature

In developing an informed response to literature, students must recognize the interrelationship between reading and writing since the basis of writing about literature is close, careful readings of a text. According to Petrosky (1982), "in order to help students understand the text they read and their response, we need to ask them to write about the text they read" (p. 20). He suggests that students "are asked to write, first, what they perceive in the text, and then how they feel about what they see, and finally what associations -- thoughts and feelings -- inform and follow their perceptions" (p. 25). Salvatori (1983) similarly believes that literature should be taught as "a way of exploring, understanding, and reflecting on the strategies by which readers...generate meanings in the act of reading" (p. 659). Petrosky (1982) further states that writing about reading is one of the best ways to get students to "unravel their transactions so that we can see how they understand" (p. 24). Sage (1987) links research on response to literature, recent composition research, and recent reading research as all these processes focus on constructing meaning from both text and background knowledge. Consequently, he advocates teaching reading in conjunction with teaching writing through the study of literature.

Recent composition research emphasizes that writing is a complex process involving more than grammatical instruction and formula writing. Composing is a recursive series of complex intellectual and cognitive processes in which a writer explores, researches and develops a topic for a real purpose and audience (Connor, 1987; Hamp-Lyons, 1986; Liebman-Kleine, 1986; Santos, 1988). Thus, to incorporate current research in second language education, and to find a framework for activities which best develop fluency and accuracy, viewing writing as a process rather than a product is an integral consideration (Cunliffe and Begin, 1988).

In contrast to personal letters and journal entries where content is spontaneous and unplanned, writing about literature is an imposed task which, like many other academic assignments, requires attention to the conventions of academic discourse, the expectations of the instructor, the context of the course, and the terms of the assignment. Approaching this writing can be less threatening and more productive when strategies in gathering information, planning, and revising are applied. The process paradigm "teaches strategies for invention and discovery; considers audience, purpose, and content of writing; emphasizes recursiveness in the writing process; and distinguishes between aims and modes of discourse" (Connor, 1987, p. 677).

In his review of research on grammar instruction, Krashen (1985) adopts Chomsky's (1965) central concept to writing: the distinction between competence and performance in writing. Krashen (1985) defines competence as the knowledge a proficient writer has about writing, whereas performance is the ability to put knowledge about writing to use in an actual composition. He claims that competence in writing does not come directly from the study of grammatical structures and discourse rules, and that performance can be improved if efficient writing processes are taught and practiced. In the process paradigm, emphasis on correctness has similarly been replaced by a concern for meaning.

Although most educators would agree that writing should be defined as more than a product to be graded for correctness, the slogan "process versus product" perhaps oversimplifies the issue. Writing is, or can be, both a process and a product (Liebman-Kleine, 1986). In the process orientation, the edited final draft becomes just one part of the task rather than the only thing that matters. Hence, "the process approach views writing as learning: the product approach views writing as display" (Liebman-Kleine, 1986, p. 787).

According to Liebman-Kleine (1986), process teaching and evaluation not only asks that instructors teach students to write but also demands judgements of competence based on more than the correctness of the product. As a result, students realize that even professional writers do not produce a perfectly polished piece of writing in one draft. Students are encouraged to work through multiple drafts where early ideas are discarded and others added, paragraphs are reorganized, diction and syntax are changed, and errors are corrected. Thus, process is "a concept that enables people to see writing in a new way and thereby ask questions that were not asked as long as people saw writing simply as finished products" (Liebman-Kleine, 1986, p. 785).

However, the process approach is not unchallenged. Horowitz (1986) criticizes the process approach to academic writing which he believes has been uncritically accepted and "miscast as a complete theory of writing" (p. 141). In his discussion of the shortcomings of this approach, he states that the process approach fails to prepare students for writing essay examinations. That is, an approach which emphasizes writing multiple drafts to promote fluency does not facilitate fast essay writing under pressure. In addition, he attacks the process approach for not preparing students to deal with the academic writing they face on entering university, such as highly structured assignments and impersonal topics.

Horowitz (1986) further disparagingly discusses the inductive orientation of the process approach since he believes that many students produce better essays by first writing careful outlines. He suggests that the inductive approach fails to prepare students for academic writing tasks which usually require them to present data from research sources according to explicit instructions. He states that since university students rarely have free choice of topics, teaching them to write intelligently on topics they do not care about is more beneficial than allowing them to choose topics which interest them: "the gentle approach of process-oriented classrooms may foster a false impression of the realities of academia, where our students' product-oriented attitudes may in fact be more adaptive" (Horowitz, 1986, p. 143).

In response to Horowitz's (1986) article, Liebman-Kleine (1986) defends the process orientation and points out that the dichotomy between the process and product approaches is neither productive nor real. She indicates that such a dichotomy reveals an extremely limited view of the process approach which is not a single approach but many approaches enabling instructors to view writing in a new way. She further points out that the process approach subsumes the product approach and involves thinking about ideas, audience, situation and purpose. Process writing also includes writing from sources, writing essay examinations, and thinking about the best way to write for a specific purpose.

Hamp-Lyons (1986) similarly defends the process approach and points out that it has shown its superiority over product approaches "in humanistic terms...in terms of student involvement and interaction and therefore motivation" (p. 790). She additionally states that inductive and deductive strategies as well as cognitive and effective preferences are all incorporated in a process approach. As a result, students brainstorm and outline, engage in solitary and social composing, peer edit, and so on to account for both different writing preferences and varied writing tasks. Furthermore, as Hamp-Lyons (1986) indicates, "if the purpose of the writer's processes is a product, then a better understanding of the processes can hardly have a negative effect on the product" (p. 793).

Refuting Horowitz's (1986) claim that process approaches create a false impression of how writing will be evaluated, Hamp-Lyons (1986) argues that such approaches to error and feedback are beneficial to both students and teachers. She states, "teachers and learners alike have been swimming (or drowning) in a sea of red ink for years" (p. 790). The teacher who considers writing as product will serve as a negative evaluator, red-marking violations of syntactic and grammatical rules, generally with little concern for originality or development of ideas. In the product orientation, teachers and tests serve as gatekeepers in the belief that if students are correct, they will write well.

Research clearly indicates that the salience of feedback on error has little, if any, effect on writing quality (Robb, Ross, and Shortreed, 1986; Sheal and Wood, 1981; Wingfield, 1975). Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986) investigated the effects of four methods of providing feedback on written error: complete correction of lexical, syntactic and stylistic errors, an abbreviated code system identifying the type of errors, uncoded feedback indicating the location of the errors, and numerical totaling of errors per line. They found that practice in writing over time resulted in gradual increases in the writing quality of all four groups regardless of the method of feedback.

Similarly, Wingfield (1975) found little difference in effect on writing quality among five techniques of dealing with errors, and suggests that ESL students can only assimilate a small amount of corrective feedback into their current grammatical systems. Sheal and Wood (1981) also examined the value of using proof reading exercises taken from student writing to enable students to correct their own writing and to make classes more interesting. They conclude that students are able to correct many of their own and other students' errors if they spend ten minutes proof reading. Furthermore, students seem to find proof reading interesting and lively since the problem-solving element interests them as they discuss and argue about errors. As Raimes (1983) points out, responding to students' writing should be part of the process of writing and "not just tacked on to the end of a teaching sequence" (p. 139).

These researchers indicate that although product teachers spend a great deal of time responding to the mechanics of student writing, less time-consuming methods of directing students' attention to surface errors are equally effective. Corrective feedback on sentence level errors addresses only one aspect of student writing ability and is more productive in a problem-solving context (Sheal and Wood, 1981). Alternately, a more effective process approach is to respond to global problems of planning and content in students' writing with comments which direct writers back to the initial stages of composing where they are reshaping and restructuring their meaning, delaying feedback on mechanical errors until the final stage of editing (Hamp-Lyons, 1986; Liebman-Kleine, 1986; Raimes, 1983).

Thus, the composing process is a complex, recursive activity which goes far beyond the simple think--outline--write linear process of much ESL student work. A wide variety of activities and assignments should therefore be employed to engage students in the process of expressing responses in order to develop the skills necessary to write critical analysis essays. As Horowitz (1986) demonstrates, attention to writing as a product is essential if students are to function effectively within a university setting. Even so, in order to teach literary analysis, instructors do not have to reject the process paradigm. An integrated theory of writing that includes both process and product is of benefit to both teachers and students.

Oral Response to Literature

Spack (1985) indicates that a new approach to understanding literature is necessary to explore and discover meaning. She states, "today, it is acceptable, even preferable, to teach literature as an exploration of meaning. We can experience literature along with our students and learn from our own writing and discussion of what we have read" (p. 720). Furthermore, as Widdowson (1985) points out:

> The most common assumption appears to be that literature teaching is concerned exclusively with study so that students are expected to make critical observations about literary works, on the supposition that they have already learned how to read them. Not surprisingly, students find this difficult to do. (p. 185)

It is perhaps by adopting current language educators' views of responding to literature that some common difficulties experienced by ESL students can be understood and addressed. For example, classroom discussions and presentations promote understanding and facilitate "the exploration of meaning" of a text (Spack, 1985, p. 720). In the ESL classroom, oral response to literature has often been restricted to students answering the instructor's questions. According to Widdowson (1985), however, this approach is an ineffective way to involve students in their learning. Rather, instructors should promote lively group or class discussion which encourages students' self-expressions in order to investigate meaning.

In his discussion of teaching literature, Applebee (1974) indicates that the instructor's task is not simply to teach a body of knowledge, but to act as a facilitator and "gradually to elaborate the linguistic and intellectual repertoire of our students, a process that is more fluid than linear" (p. 255). In order to build students' confidence as well as to encourage student participation, it is also the instructor's responsibility to foster a low affective filter -- that is, classrooms which "promote low anxiety among students, that keep students off the defensive" (Krashen, 1985, p. 32). Thus, educators (Applebee, 1974; McKay, 1982; Sage, 1987; Spack, 1985) recognize that by sharing interpretations in a stimulating, non-threatening environment, students come to understand how meaning can be interpreted. Activities such as group or class discussions and student presentations should consequently be an integral component so that participants gain insights into literary texts through the exchange of ideas involved in responding orally to literature.

Although the controversy concerning how, when and why literature should be used in second language classrooms is unresolved, many authorities (McKay, 1982; Sage, 1987; Spack, 1985; Widdowson, 1975, 1982, 1983) recognize the value of literature in developing language proficiency. As Sage (1987) comments, the debate has "attracted some of the best minds. These teachers find the use of literature in language teaching an interesting and worthy concern" (p. 2). Their concern is reflected in "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" which presents objectives and activities designed to develop students' informed critical response to literature (Cunliffe and Begin, 1988).

Program Evaluation

"The current evaluation scene is marked by vitality and disorder. The scale, ubiquity, and diversity of evaluation activities make comprehension difficult even for those operating within the field" (House, 1980, p. 11). A review of the literature defining evaluation reflects such diversity and reveals that there is no common philosophy, focus, or terminology of evaluation, or agreement about how best to conduct an evaluation. Despite this lack of agreement, there are similar elements in many of the definitions of evaluation. At its simplest, House (1980) states, "evaluation leads to a judgment about the worth of something" (p. 18), while Dillon (1984) provides the following definition: "Evaluation research can be conceived as a question-answering process, and the knowledge that results as a question-answer proposition" (p. 7).

New programs are established through a series of decision-making processes involving planning, anticipating, acquiring, developing, and implementing resources. Evaluation has typically been viewed as the final activity of such decision-making processes. However, Scriven (1967) has distinguished between "formative" and "summative" evaluation. He defines formative evaluation as that undertaken during the development and implementation of a program, whereas summative evaluation is that conducted after the program has been in operation for a period of time. The purpose of formative evaluation is to guide and assist program development and improvement; the purpose of summative evaluation is to determine the overall worth of a program and to assist in making decisions concerning its continuation, modification, or termination.

Thus, program evaluation determines whether to improve, maintain, or terminate a program and involves the following process:

a) agreeing upon program standards
b) determining whether a discrepancy exists between some aspects of the program and the standards governing that aspect of the program
c) using discrepancy information to identify the weaknesses of the program (Provus, 1973, p. 172).

Provus (1973) further points out that the evaluator can only be reasonably confident of what he is evaluating after the program's antecedent conditions, transactions, and outcomes have been clearly described in the program evaluation.

When Stake (1973) examines formal educational evaluation, he finds a lack of attention to antecedent conditions and classroom transactions and little effort to relate these to program outcomes. That is, he believes that there has been "little attempt...to measure the match between what an educator intends to do and what he does do" (p. 108). Consequently, he emphasizes the contingencies among background conditions, classroom activities, and performance outcomes and stresses that a program evaluation should include an evaluation of its materials.

Stake (1973) also distinguishes between description and judgment in program evaluation. He points out that evaluation should combine description of "aptitudes and environments and accomplishments" with judgements of a program's merits since "both description and judgment are essential -- in fact, they are the two basic acts of evaluation" (p. 109). Among the groups he identifies as having important opinions which contribute to a program evaluation are subject-matter specialists, teachers, and students themselves. He therefore advocates evaluation which includes both description data and judgment data which "portray the merit and fault perceived by well-identified groups, systematically gathered and processed" (p. 112).

The Countenance Model of evaluation developed by Stake (1967) consists of two matrices: a description matrix and a judgment matrix. As shown in Figure 3, this model distinguishes between antecedent, transaction, and outcome data. Antecedents are defined as the conditions existing prior to program implementation which could affect program outcomes. The events which lead to program creation and implementation, student aptitudes and attitudes, and instructor properties are examples of the antecedents which an evaluator may describe. Transactions are the planned processes of the program, the content of the course, and involve the dynamic interactions in "the succession of engagements which comprise the process of education" (Sake, 1973, p. 112). Outcomes are broadly defined as program consequences such as "the abilities, achievements, attitudes, and aspirations of students resulting from an educational experience" (Stake, 1973, p. 112).

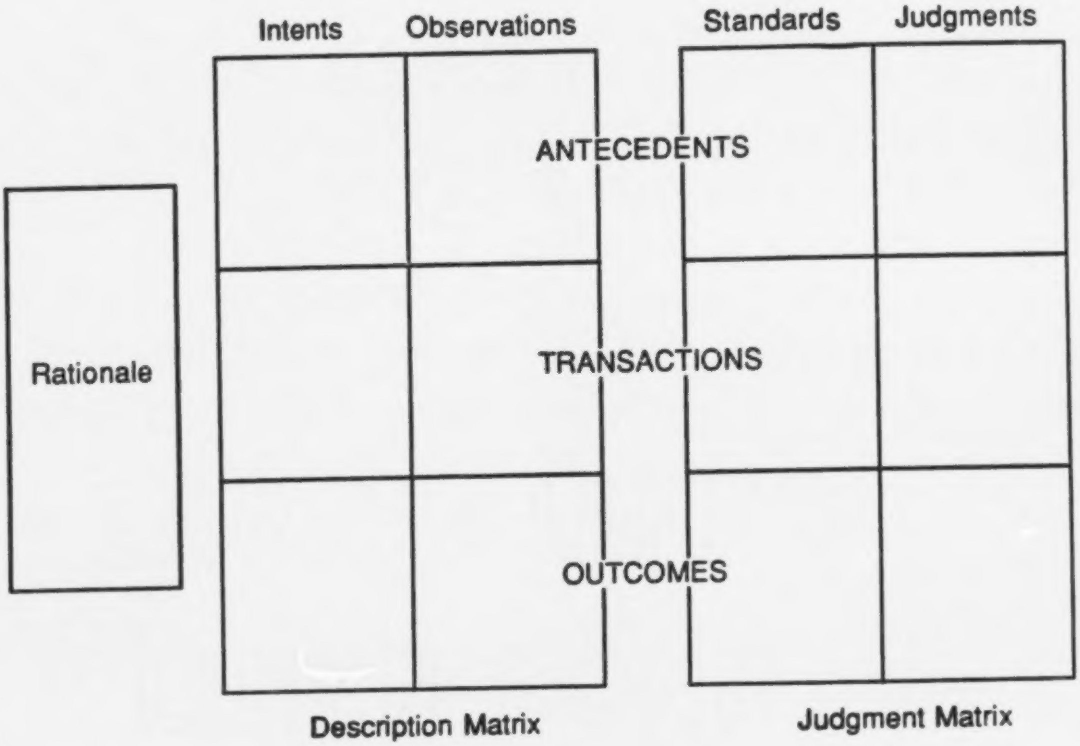
Intents
Observations
Standards
Judgments
Rationale
ANTECEDENTS
TRANSACTIONS
OUTCOMES
Description Matrix
Judgment Matrix

Figure 3: Evaluation Framework for the Study

In this Countenance Model, the descriptive matrix involves collecting data on the intents and observations of the program antecedents, transactions, and outcomes while the judgments matrix involves collecting data concerning the standards and judgments made with respect to antecedents, transactions, and program outcomes. Intents include the planned experiences of the curriculum as well as the planned student behaviors and examine "what teaching as well as what learning, is intended" (Stake, 1973, p. 115). Most of the descriptive data are classified as observations which may comprise of the evaluator's personal observations and/or data collected through instruments such as interviews and questionnaires. In judging the characteristics of a program, the evaluator indicates "the goodness-of-fit" of a curriculum and "accepts responsibility of informing consumers of the merit of the program" (Stake, 1973, p. 123). In addition, program rationale is recorded; this rationale indicates the underlying philosophy and the basic purpose of the program.

Because of its versatility and applicability to a wide variety of evaluation contexts, the Stake orientation was chosen to provide the structure which guided this study. The study was intended to provide both description and judgment; therefore, the Stake model, which emphasizes both these components, was appropriate as the mnemonic device for planning the evaluation. Thus, this study can best be defined as a descriptive study which included as substantial analytical component to examine factors associated with summative evaluation in order to evaluate perceptions of the "goodness-of-fit" of the curriculum.

Due to the small number of participants involved in the study, the interview was also chosen as a major source of data. Udinsky, Osterlind, and Lynch (1981) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the use of interviews and note that interviews may provide data which can be difficult to quantify as well as involve significant time to perform. They also point out that the interview opens the study to the interviewer's and the respondents' biases. On the other hand, these authors state that interviews provide large amounts of data from small numbers of respondents and allow the possibility of uncovering information which might not otherwise be forthcoming.

In discussing interview design, McCallon and McCray (1975) describe the advantages and disadvantages of structured and unstructured formats. The unstructured format allows deeper probing of the topic and is "most appropriate for conducting explorations to gain deeper and broader insight into a particular situation" (p. 4). However, as Udinsky, Osterlind, and Lynch (1981) indicate, the totally unstructured interview is most open to biases and is the least amenable to analysis. McCallon and McCray (1975) suggest the use of an interview guide which should be treated as a flexible tool to allow the interviewer to respond to cues and implications contained in responses.

Based on these considerations, semi-structured interviews were used to augment data obtained from student questionnaires and to pursue a deeper probing of topics. The questions on the interview guide served as starting points for discussion on the topics concerned.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review the research related to teaching literature in ESL programs. First a review of content-based approaches to language instruction identified theme-based, adjunct, and sheltered courses as the three major models of EAP courses. While all models emphasize the use of authentic texts and materials, adjunct and sheltered courses require that both content materials and language activities are closely linked to one or more academic disciplines in order to meet students' specific academic needs. Sheltered content-based courses also afford the benefit of a low anxiety learning environment which excludes native speakers of the host language.

A brief historical overview of first language literature programs revealed that the current approach of confining the study of literature to interpretive and evaluative analysis separate from the study of rhetoric is not a long-standing tradition. Moreover, many language educators now urge the reintegration of the study of composition with the study of literature. Regarding second language programs, the literature indicated that although some researchers oppose the inclusion of English literature in ESL classrooms, others strongly believe that reading and writing can justifiably be taught in conjunction with the study of literature.

Theories of reading described a radical change from viewing reading as a static process to thinking about reading as an interactive process between reader and text. Theories of writing presented both product and process approaches to writing and suggested that an integrated theory of writing which included both these approaches benefitted both instructors and students. Finally, the research revealed the importance of responding orally to literature to facilitate the exploration of meaning.

The review of literature related to program evaluation presented in the last part of this chapter indicated that the Stake (1972) Countenance Model was appropriate to provide a framework for the evaluation because of its attention to antecedents, transactions, and outcomes as well as its emphasis of both description and judgment. Based on literature discussing interview design, semi-structured interviews were selected as the major source of information for the evaluative study.

Chapter 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter first provides a description of the design and methodology of the study, including the evaluation model selected to frame the study. The evaluation model is then related to the conceptual model in terms of presage, process, and product variables. Next, details of data collection and analysis are discussed. Finally, analysis of data from each of these sources are presented.

Design of the Study

Stake's (1967) evaluation model was used as a framework for the study.

Evaluation Framework

According to Stake (1967), contemporary educators relied little on formal evaluation because it seldom answered questions they had been asking. On the other hand, reliance on informal evaluation seldom yielded relevant research reports or behavioral data pertinent to curricular decisions.

Since the purpose of this study was to formally evaluate the effectiveness of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" in terms of the product variables specified in Chapter 1, the Stake model of evaluation was selected because of its versatility and its applicability to a variety of evaluation contexts. The evaluation model is comprised of three components: antecedents, transactions, and outcomes. The antecedents (the events which led to the creation and implementation of the introductory literature course) were reviewed to establish the framework of the course. Antecedents also include the presage variables, that is, student entry behaviors and instructor properties. These antecedents were used to outline the course environment.

The transactions include the process variables. Examination of transactions in terms of curriculum content provided description of the course as implemented. The third component of the evaluation model, the outcomes or product variables, were also investigated in this study. Outcomes included degrees of satisfaction and perceptions of effectiveness identified by the students participating in the introductory literature course. Data included interview content and the themes which emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts and student questionnaires which were analyzed using descriptive statistics -- frequencies and percentages.

The vertical dimensions of the evaluation model are intents, observations, standards, and judgements. In this study, intents were the objectives of the introductory course, and the observations represented respondents' perceptions gathered from the specified data sources. Standards, the basis for judgement, were formulated through information collected from the two data sources.

Creation and Implementation of the Introductory Literature Course

The low academic performance of ESL students taking first year literature courses at the University of Alberta had been a long-standing concern frequently expressed by both faculty and students involved in such courses. As reported in Chapter 1, since many of these students had successfully completed the advanced levels of the English Language Program (ELP) before taking a first year literature course, the Director and staff of the ELP were aware of the need for a new course which would address these concerns. Consequently, the researcher and a colleague (both instructors with the ELP) were contracted to develop an introductory literature course intended to prepare ESL students for university-level literature courses. Prior to the development of the curriculum for the introductory literature course, as requested by the Director of the ELP, a needs survey was conducted in August 1987, by the researcher and a colleague. In order to identify areas problematic for ESL students studying first year literature courses, two questionnaire were developed: one for faculty teaching first year literature courses and one for ESL students taking such courses (see Appendix A for these instruments).

Needs Survey

Part one of the faculty questionnaire requested respondents to identify the reading difficulties experienced by ESL students dealing with poems, short stories, novels, plays, and essays as well as to state other factors which negatively influenced students' reading abilities. Part two of the questionnaire asked respondents to specify the difficulties ESL students experienced when completing writing assignments. Part three of the questionnaire requested information concerning ESL students' difficulties associated with listening and speaking in university-level literature classes and asked that respondents identify the strengths and weaknesses of ESL students who had completed first year literature courses.

The student questionnaire was designed in a similar manner as the faculty questionnaire. Part one asked respondents to identify difficulties they experienced reading literary texts, while part two asked respondents to state difficulties they experienced completing written assignments. Part three requested information about listening comprehension and speaking difficulties. Respondents were also asked to identify either the factors which helped them pass or fail first year literature courses.

The faculty questionnaire was pilot-tested with two professors from the Department of English; the student questionnaire was pilot-tested with four ESL students who had previously completed a first year literature course. Appropriate modifications, such as including more open-ended questions, were made to improve the construction of questions and to ensure ease of response.

The respondent groups for the needs assessment were identified in two ways. First, the Chair of the English Department provided a list of all faculty who had taught a first year literature course during the Winter II session, 1987. Secondly, the Registrar's Office provided a list of all ESL students who had taken a first year literature course during this same session. The researchers mailed the questionnaires to the specified groups, September 2, 1987. In total, 161 questionnaires were mailed -- 92 to students and 69 to faculty. Respondents were asked to return the completed questionnaires to the ELP at the Faculty of Extension by October 2, 1987. After the return date, responses were checked against the lists of questionnaires mailed; then, researchers contacted non-responding faculty and students by telephone.

The final response rate to the faculty questionnaire was 26%, while the response rate to the student questionnaire was 25%. It may be that the request for questionnaire completion at the beginning of a new university semester as well as the length of the questionnaires influenced the low return rate. Also, when non-responding faculty were contacted by telephone, many expressed a lack of interest in the introductory course. Despite the low rate of return, responses compiled during November, 1987 were valuable in the process of syllabus development and yielded the following information.

On questions related to reading, both professors and students regarded poetry as the most difficult genre; interpretation, vocabulary, and figurative language appeared to be especially problematic. However, faculty directed greater attention to lack of cultural exposure and lack of comprehension than did students. Plays were specified as the second most difficult genre. Again, vocabulary and figurative language were identified as problematic, as was lack of cultural exposure. Although some students reported short stories, novels, and essays as areas of difficulty, in general, students showed less concern about these genres than professors.

Further factors which were commonly identified as affecting reading ability were reading speed and library research skills.

Questions about writing indicated the ability to compose a logical, coherent critical analysis essay was crucial for success in first year literature courses. Furthermore, a good writing style which presented a concise and coherent position, along with strong motivation were considered the strengths of those students who passed first year literature courses. All professors indicated that the inability to express oneself clearly, correctly, and in sufficient depth on a work of literature was a major weakness of students who failed such courses. Grammar, content, organization, idiom, vocabulary, and time pressure were generally denoted as problematic areas of writing. In addition, a majority of students who responded emphasized the professor's role as facilitator as essential for their success.

Other questions dealt with listening and speaking skills. In listening, the prevalent responses stressed a lack of a literary background, the use of vernacular, and general language incompetence as areas of weakness. Although students cited a lack of verbal confidence and non-familiarity with literary analysis and terminology, these areas were not emphasized by faculty. Even so, the majority of respondents indicated that class participation influenced students' final grades to some extent.

In terms of comparing both professors' and students' responses, it appeared that although many ESL students had some mastery of basic writing skills and grammatical elements of English, they were unable to deal with the critical writing and interpretive reading necessary for the university-level study of literature. Thus, it was concluded that improvement of the reading and writing skills required to compose critical analysis essays should be a major focus of the introductory literature course. That is, in order to ease the transition from composition courses to literature courses, reading and writing should be taught through the study of literature.

The Introductory Literature Course

The overall objective of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" was for students to develop an informed critical response to literature. As reported earlier, the course developers conducted a search of the literature in November, 1987 as part of course development. Current research related to content-based language instruction and to the teaching of literature in second language programs was incorporated with insights gained from the needs analysis survey to define objectives for the introductory literature course. Objectives were refined and activities were developed to support these objectives from December, 1987 to August, 1988. An overview of global objectives, as well as intermediate and skill objectives for each of the language components was presented in Chapter 1.

The course outline is presented in Appendix B. Sample activities for the course are included in Appendix C. "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" was offered for the first time October 12, 1988 - March 29, 1989. Bi-weekly evening classes were held from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the University of Alberta.

Placement Assessment

In August, 1988 placement test instruments were developed to test ESL students' entry level English language skills in writing (an essay test) and in listening and speaking (an informal interview). Reading skills were evaluated using the standardized Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency. This test contained 100 items which were divided into three parts: a grammar test, a vocabulary test, a test of reading comprehension. Writing skills were evaluated with an essay test. Students selected one of five questions and wrote an essay of at least 300 words. Finally, students' listening and speaking skills were evaluated by means of interviews. Each student was interviewed individually; interviews consisted of ten questions which were discussed in an informal manner. The test instruments are presented in Appendix D.

In order to ascertain that students who registered for the introductory literature course had the English language skills necessary to enroll in an ESL class at the advanced level, prerequisite scores were established as follows:

1. Michigan -- minimum score 70%
2. Essay -- minimum score 5 on Caroll's (1980) Writing Assessment scale (see Appendix E for this scale).
3. Interview -- minimum score 6 on Caroll's (1980) Interview Assessment scale (see Appendix E for this scale).

Students registered for ESL classes in the English Language Program at the University of Alberta must attain these minimum scores to be placed in classes at the advanced level. Students who scored below the prerequisite levels would first take appropriate intermediate ESL classes to improve areas of weakness before registering for the introductory literature course.

The Director of the ELP announced the placement test along with a description of the course in the local newspaper; notices were also posted at various locations on campus. Of the 18 students who attended the placement test, 15 registered in the introductory course. The placement test was held at the Faculty of Extension September 10, 1988. A total of 18 students took the placement test. Of these, two students did not obtain the prerequisite scores for the introductory course; one student decided not to register for the course; fifteen students enrolled in the introductory course.

Student Entry Behaviors

Participants in this study were all students enrolled in "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" during the 1988-89 Winter Session at the University of Alberta.

A questionnaire was used at the first class meeting of the course on October 12, 1988 to gather demographic data, to identify student needs, and to complement information gained from the needs survey. The questionnaire (presented in Appendix F) was divided into three sections. Questions in the first section were designed to complement information gained from the needs survey and asked students to identify difficulties they encountered in the four language areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This section included both open and closed response categories and a ranking item. The second section involved questions about respondents' previous education in English. These demographic questions were included to provide subjects' relevant background education, level of language competency as indicated by a TOEFL score, and previous exposure to the study of literature. The open-ended questions in the final section were intended to reveal respondents' attitudes and perceptions about studying English literature. Because the researcher administered the questionnaire in class, a covering letter was unnecessary. Respondents were invited to ask for clarification as necessary but did not experience any problems interpreting the questions.

A questionnaire was selected since it permitted time-efficient data collection from members of the respondent group. Personally administering the questionnaire provided the researcher the opportunity to establish rapport with the respondents and to explain the purpose of the research. Furthermore, completing the questionnaire in class time facilitated a 100% response rate. Since the topic was of importance to the students, they were motivated to complete the questionnaire and to respond to the open-ended questions. Students were given the opportunity to opt out of the study; however, all class members agreed to participate.

Demographic data provided the following student profile. Seventy-nine percent of respondents were native Cantonese speakers, seven percent native Creole speakers, seven percent native Arabic speakers, and seven percent native Persian speakers. Their TOEFL scores ranged from 530-630. Seventy-one percent of respondents had completed high school matriculation English, while the remaining 29% had taken ESL courses to the advanced level at the University of Alberta. Twenty-six percent of subjects had never studied literature in their native languages, while the majority (64%) had previously studied literature in their native languages during the finl year of high school.

Although the introductory literature course was intended to prepare students for study of first year literature courses, some respondents (33%) were taking it concurrently with a first year university-level literature course because they had received failing grades in the latter after the first writing assignment had been completed (this introductory transition course began approximately one month after the regular term). Consequently, these students stressed the need to improve their writing skills. Most respondents (67%) were taking the introductory literature course to increase their understanding of English literature as well as to develop their reading comprehension and writing skills in preparation for entry into a first year literature course. Of these respondents, some (27%) had previously taken a first year university literature course but had not completed the course successfully.

The compiled questionnaire data revealed difficulties students experienced in studying literature. The majority of students (73%) indicated that all aspects of Shakespearean drama were especially problematic. The next most difficult genre was poetry; interpretation, figurative language, vocabulary, and comprehension appeared to create the greatest problems. Plays were specified as the third most difficult genre. Other items identified as creating reading difficulties were slow reading speed, the use of vernacular, lack of library research skills, and lack of interest in studying literature.

On questions related to writing, most respondents (93%) indicated that they lacked the ability to compose a logical, coherent, critical analysis essay. Students stressed their inability to express themselves clearly and fluently and identified organization, grammar, and vocabulary as their areas of greatest weakness.

Other questions dealt with listening and speaking skills. Thirty-three percent of respondents perceived that they had little or no difficulty understanding lectures, while most (67%) experienced some difficulty comprehending lecture content. Frequently cited reasons for listening difficulties were lack of literary background (40%), general language incompetence (33%), and non-familiarity with slang, jokes, and the use of vernacular (33%). A further problematic area was the inability to understand spoken English delivered at normal lecture speed (20%).

In speaking, several respondents (33%) perceived that they participated somewhat in class discussions, whereas the majority (67%) participated very little if not at all. Factors frequently identified as negatively affecting speaking ability were lack of verbal confidence (53%), non-familiarity with literary terminology (40%), and lack of the vocabulary necessary to express ideas (33%). Moreover, other respondents (13%) pointed out that they were seldom expected to participate in class discussions in their native countries; therefore, they were reluctant to speak up in class.

In identifying students' needs, examination of the questionnaire data complemented information collected from the needs survey previously conducted. Respondents clearly indicated their desire to improve the writing and reading skills necessary to compose a concise, coherent essay in sufficient depth on a work of literature.

Instructor Properties

The instructor for the introductory literature course was qualified and experienced in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Her academic qualifications included a Bachelor of Education with a major in English and a minor in TESL, as well as courses at the Master of Education level with a emphasis in TESL. She had been employed as an instructor for the English Language Program at the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta for two years where she specialized in teaching academic language skills at the advanced levels.

Working with advanced ESL students had given her both the knowledge and an appreciation of the problems students encountered when taking first year literature courses. She therefore recognized the need for the introductory literature course to address these specific concerns.

Data Collection

Two methods of data collection were employed to evaluate students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ESL literature course in preparing them for study of first year literature courses--student questionnaires and student interviews.

Student Questionnaires

In addition to the questionnaire used to gather demographic data, a second questionnaire was used for data collection. A questionnaire (see Appendix G) intended to measure students' agreement that the introductory literature course had given them the knowledge and skills necessary to read, interpret, analyze, and write about literature was developed utilizing the Instructor Designed Questionnaire (IDQ) system adapted by the Department of Computing Services at the University of Alberta. This instrument had been validated and allowed for normative as well as individualized feedback on the quality of instruction. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions; both original and standardized IDQ items were included. Closed questions were worded to be consistent with the standard IDQ rating scale:

SD = strongly disagree
D = disagree
N = neither agree nor disagree
A = agree
SA = strongly agree

Part one of the questionnaire consisted of closed questions ranked according to the specified IDQ scale. Questions 1-10 concerned the instructor's effectiveness both in manner of instruction and interaction with students. Specifically, respondents were asked to rate the following items:

1. Overall, the instruction was effective.
2. The instructor provided an atmosphere conducive to learning.
3. The instructor gave clear explanations.

4. The instructor made good use of examples and illustrations.
5. The instructor presented material in an interesting and helpful manner.
6. The instructor made the course sufficiently challenging.
7. The instructor had a good rapport with the class.
8. The instructor was willing to meet and help students outside class.
9. The instructor provided helpful feedback.
10. The instructor treated students with respect.

The next set of questions, 11-25, evaluated component parts of the introductory course. Items included the following:

11. The course was well organized.
12. The objectives of the course were clearly explained.
13. The objectives of the course were achieved.
14. The amount of material covered in the course was reasonable.
15. Class participation was actively encouraged.
16. The level of difficulty of the course material was appropriate.
17. Assignments were relevant to what was presented in class.
18. Assignments were challenging and worthwhile.
19. Grades were assigned fairly and impartially.
20. I learned to identify formal characteristics of literary texts.
21. I gained a good understanding of concepts/principles in this field.
22. I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations.
23. I utilized all the learning opportunities provided in the course.
24. I would recommend this course to other students.

25. A real strength of this course was the classroom discussion.

The final set of questions, 26-29, evaluated the effectiveness of the course in improving students' perceived ability and confidence in the study of literature. These items were developed by the researcher/instructor and were not taken from the IDQ item bank. Items were as follows:

26. I developed my ability to communicate about literature.
27. I developed my ability to read literature.
28. I developed my ability to write about literature.
29. I developed more confidence in myself.

Part two of the questionnaire included three open-ended questions which investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the introductory course. Students responded to the following questions:

A. How can this course be improved?
B. Which aspects of the course were most valuable?
C. Which aspects of the course were least valuable?

Finally, respondents were asked to comment on the quality of instruction in the course and on any other matter relevant to it.

Pilot-test of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire measuring student satisfaction was pilot-tested in August, 1988 with five ESL students who were registered in the advanced writing class of the English Language Program but were not enrolled in the introductory course. After feedback, a few questions were modified appropriately to ensure comprehension and ease of response.

Administration of Questionnaires

Prior to administration of the questionnaires, consent forms were distributed to all students registered in "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" at the final class meeting on March 29, 1989. The consent form (presented in Appendix G) described the purpose of the questionnaire and indicated the confidentiality of responses. Also, students were given the opportunity to opt out of the study and assured that participation would not affect their final course grades.

The researcher explained the purpose of the questionnaire in terms of this study and invited students' questions. After questions had been answered, all the students consented to take part in the study.

Questionnaires were then distributed to the 15 students. Next, respondents completed the questionnaire in the classroom; completion time was approximately 30 minutes. The completed questionnaires were placed in a signed, sealed envelope and held by a student in the class until March 31, 1989, after final course grades had been submitted to the Director of the English Language Program. After this time, questionnaires were given to the researcher for analysis of the open-ended questions; the closed format questionnaires were optically scanned by the Computing Science Department of the University of Alberta.

Student Interviews

Due to the small number of students involved in the study, the interview was chosen as another major source of information.

interviews augmented data obtained from student questionnaires and allowed a deeper probing of topics.

In preparing the interview questions, the researcher obtained the assistance of three professors in the Adult and Higher Education Program at the University of Alberta. A draft of the introductory statement and the questions was submitted to each of these professors for their comment and advice. Changes to the final interview guide included revision of the introductory statement and reduction of the number of questions.

Interview objectives were as follows:

1. To elicit participants' perceptions of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students"
2. To understand participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of this course for increasing confidence in the university-level study of literature
3. To understand participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of this course for improving ability to study literature at the university level.

The questions for the interviews were taken directly from the research questions guiding this study. The introductory statement and main questions were as follows:

There has been a recognition of the need for an introductory literature course which prepares ESL students for the university-level study of literature.

1. Describe for me your thoughts and reflections on "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students."

2. How effective is this introductory course in increasing your confidence to study literature at the university-level?
3. How effective is this introductory course for improving your knowledge and skills to study literature at the university level?

Interviews were semi-structured to enable the researcher to respond to cues and implications contained in the responses given. The specified questions served as the starting points for discussion on the topics concerned.

Administration of Interviews

Before the interview began, each respondent was given a consent form. This consent form (presented in Appendix H) stated the purpose of the interview; it also stressed the anonymity of responses. Again, students were given the opportunity to opt out of the study and assured that participation would not affect their final course grades. All students registered in the introductory literature course agreed to be interviewed.

Interviews were conducted in the Education Building March 31, 1989 immediately after completion of the course to elicit students' perceptions while they were still fresh in their minds. Interviews were held at 40 minute intervals according to a prearranged schedule. Responses were recorded both in note form and on tape. Interviews took between 20 and 30 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics -- frequencies and percentages. Open-ended questions were grouped thematically. Analysis of the interviews was performed by reviewing transcripts for topics of concern or interest to the respondents and then grouping the responses according to thematic content.

Summary

This chapter presented the evaluation framework which guided this study. In accordance with Stake's (1967) model of evaluation, antecedents were described to outline the course environment. Antecedents reviewed were the creation and implementation of the introductory course including the needs survey, description of the new course, placement assessment, student entry behaviors, and instructor properties.

Discussion of the design of the study revealed the two methods of data collection employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the introductory literature course as questionnaires and interviews. Pilot-testing and consequent modification of these instruments was noted and a detailed description of the evaluation instruments was provided.

All students registered in "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" in the time period specified in the design of the study were identified as the source of data for the study. Administration of questionnaires and interviews was discussed as well as the procedures for obtaining respondents' consent. Comments on data analysis of questionnaires stated that responses to closed questions were optically scanned and analyzed by computer while open-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Tape recorded interviews were analyzed for thematic content.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

As stated in the previous chapter, this study utilized three sources of information. First, a discussion of antecedents provided a description of the events which led to the creation and implementation of the introductory course. Second, examination of the transactions through semi-structured interviews with each of the participants probed students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the curriculum content of the course. Third, outcomes were investigated by means of an IDQ researcher developed questionnaire intended to reveal the degree of students' satisfaction and perceptions of course effectiveness.

The first section of the chapter presents the results of this questionnaire. The four areas of importance identified by respondents are presented. The second section of this chapter presents the information obtained from participants' interviews.

Information derived from data sources is categorized according to the research questions guiding this study.

Questionnaire Responses

The first data source, a student questionnaire developed for the course in the IDQ form, investigated the effectiveness of the introductory literature course in order to evaluate participants' perceived increase in confidence to study university-level literature courses as well as to assess their perceived improvement in the knowledge and skills necessary to study such courses. Students' responses concerning the course effectiveness are presented in these two categories.

Participants were asked to rate closed questions according to the IDQ scale specified in Chapter 3. The five point scale was reduced to three responses: agree (strongly agree and agree); neutral (neither agree nor disagree); and disagree (disagree and strongly disagree). Ratings in each of the three categories were converted to percentages and rounded to the nearest whole number. Due to rounding, the sum of percentage scores in tables may be greater or less than 100%.

Open-ended items on the questionnaire gave participants the opportunity to provide written comments. These comments were organized thematically and have been reported in each of the categories investigated. All words or sentences placed in quotation marks have been taken directly from respondents' written comments and have been edited to correct grammatical errors only.

Instructor Effectiveness in Manner of Instruction

Students' ratings of the instructor's effectiveness in manner of instruction are presented in Table 3.1. All respondents agreed that the instructor gave clear explanations. Five students commented positively on the clarity of instruction; however, one respondent indicated that although the instruction was clear, the course was still very difficult for ESL students. As Table 3.1 shows, the majority of students (87%) agreed that overall instruction was effective. Comments on the effectiveness of instruction (seven) ranged from "very useful for an ESL student with little knowledge of literature" to "the quality of instruction in this course was outstanding." Most participants described the instructor as friendly and helpful and specified that she presented material in an interesting and useful manner. As one respondent explained, "The instructor was very well organized, well prepared, knew her materials, and gave us useful information. She was very friendly and helpful."

Table 3.1

Instructor's Effectiveness in Manner of Instruction

Item	Ratings		
	agree	neutral	disagree
Instructor gave clear explanations	100%	0%	0%
Overall, the instruction was effective	87%	13%	0%
Instructor presented material in an interesting and helpful manner	80%	20%	0%
Instructor made good use of examples and illustrations	80%	20%	0%
Instructor made the course sufficiently challenging	67%	26%	7%

As can be seen in Table 3.1, although most respondents (67%) agreed that the course was sufficiently challenging, some (26%) were neutral, and others (7%) disagreed. Respondents' comments regarding this item varied greatly. One comment was that the level of the introductory course was too low and the course did not help prepare a student for a first year literature course if that person had previously studied high school matriculation English. Two respondents indicated that the pace of the course was too slow, particularly in the first half of the semester. On the other hand, two participants felt that the course was very difficult for ESL students, and that the pace of instruction was rather too fast. One student indicated that the starting point of the course was too difficult for students who had never previously studied English literature. Perhaps the divergence of participants' entry-level skills best explains this disparity in responses.

Instructor Effectiveness in Interaction with Students

Respondents also rated the instructor on her interaction with students; these ratings are presented in Table 3.2. Participants clearly felt that the instructor interacted well with students and established a good rapport with the class. The majority (93%) indicated both that students were treated respectfully and that useful feedback was provided throughout the course. Three comments on these items stated that the instructor was "helpful," "patient," and "always willing to answer questions."

Most respondents (87%) felt that the instructor provided a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Individual comments (eight) stressed students' need for a low-anxiety learning environment where they were not afraid to express their opinions, present their interpretations, or ask questions. One respondent commented, "In this class, I knew other students would not laugh at my poor vocabulary and my thick accent, so I was not afraid to speak." Another stated, "In other classes I am ashamed of my poor speaking ability because the students will laugh at my bad pronunciation." Comments indicated a non-threatening classroom as essential for these students to gain the confidence necessary for oral participation without fear of ridicule.

Table 3.2

Instructor's Effectiveness in Interaction with Students

Item	Ratings		
	agree	neutral	disagree
Instructor treated students with respect	93%	7%	0%
Instructor provided helpful feedback throughout the course	93%	7%	0%
Instructor was willing to meet and help students outside class	93%	7%	0%
Instructor provided an atmosphere conducive to learning	87%	13%	0%
Instructor had a good rapport with the class	87%	7%	7%

Effectiveness of the Course Components

The students' ratings of the effectiveness of the course components appear in Table 3.3. Respondents unanimously believed the course was well organized and four students commented positively about the course organization. The majority (93%) of students thought that the course objectives were clearly explained; most respondents (87%) also felt that the course objectives were achieved.

As shown in Table 3.3, the majority of respondents expressed agreement with all items. Regarding the amount of material covered in the course, on this item, three students indicated that they felt pressured by the out-of-class time required to complete reading and writing assignments.

Table 3.3

Effectiveness of Course Components

Item	Ratings		
	agree	neutral	disagree
Course was well organized	100%	0%	0%
Course objectives were clearly explained	93%	7%	0%
Course objectives were achieved	87%	7%	7%
Amount of material covered was reasonable	80%	13%	7%

Table 3.3 (continued)

Item	Ratings		
	agree	neutral	disagree
Level of difficulty of material was appropriate	80%	13%	7%
Assignments were relevant to what was presented in class	87%	13%	0%
Assignments were challenging and worthwhile	87%	13%	0%
Grades were assigned fairly and impartially	87%	7%	7%
Class participation was actively encouraged	80%	20%	0%
A strength of this course was classroom discussion	73%	7%	20%
I learned to identify formal characteristics of literary texts	80%	20%	0%
I gained a good understanding of concepts in this field	67%	26%	7%
I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations	67%	26%	7%
I utilized all learning opportunities provided in the course	67%	33%	0%
I would recommend this course to other students	80%	13%	7%
I developed more confidence in myself	73%	20%	7%

Although most respondents (87%) indicated that assignments were challenging and worthwhile and that grades were fairly and impartially assigned, one student was not satisfied with the practice of grading both first and second essay drafts. Since students in first year literature courses are usually not permitted to re-write essays, this participant felt that multiple drafts elevated essay grades in the introductory course.

Whereas over half (67%) of the participants indicated that they had gained a good understanding of the concepts and principles in the field of literature, others (33%) were less certain they had mastered these concepts. Two students commented they felt that their writing skills were still too weak to pass a first year literature course. One student pointed out that he/she still had "a lot of difficulties in interpreting literature." Another respondent stated, "As an ESL student, it takes more time to reach a high level and I think the course should be longer."

Most students (73%) thought the course was effective in improving self-confidence, others (20%) were neutral, while a minority (7%) disagreed. One student stated that he/she felt that it was impossible for an ESL student who had no background in English literature to pass a university-level literature course without first gaining the self-confidence derived from the introductory course. A strong point of view expressed by another student was as follows:

> My previous experience in a university literature course was very bad. I felt embarrassed and humiliated. I lost all my confidence and withdrew from all my credit courses. Now I feel I can be successful at university. My reading speed and comprehension is much better. I really

> can enjoy reading novels and short stories, and my writing is so, so much better!

Thus, as the questionnaire data revealed, respondents generally perceived that both the instructor and the course had contributed to an increase in their confidence to study literature at the university level.

Regarding factors which affected respondents' perceived improvement in the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully study literature at the university level, findings indicated that the two areas of importance were the effectiveness of the introductory course, and strengths and weaknesses of this course.

Effectiveness of the Introductory Literature Course

Ratings of the effectiveness of the introductory course in improving students' perceived knowledge and skills to study university literature courses are presented in Table 3.4. Respondents (80%) clearly acknowledged that the course was effective in improving their abilities to communicate about literature, and their abilities to read and write about literature. Four students stated that class presentations and discussions which promoted the exchange of interpretations helped them express their ideas and encouraged them to use appropriate literary terminology. Individual comments showed that the non-threatening learning environment had facilitated class participation and enhanced respondents' abilities to communicate about literature.

Table 3.4

Ability to Respond to Literature

Item	Ratings		
	agree	neutral	disagree
I developed my ability to communicate about literature	80%	20%	0%
I developed my ability to write about literature	80%	20%	0%
I developed my ability to read literature	80%	13%	7%

Most students (ten) commented on their improved reading and writing skills. Students indicated that they had a better understanding of critical, literary essay form and structure and were also now able to incorporate textual evidence into their essays to support their opinions. Students also believed they had improved their mastery of English syntax and grammar. One student stated that breaking down the writing of an essay into small, simple steps had been particularly useful. Another student wrote, "I liked best the part where we learned how to structure the essay and learned many rules of grammar. I did not understand these things before." On the other hand, some respondents (three) felt that their writing skills remained weak. One student stated, "My writing is weak. I can write only simple sentences and simple vocabulary. I make many mistakes when I write an essay in English."

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Introductory Course

In the open-ended questions included in the last section of the questionnaire, students were asked to provide information and comments on the most and the least valuable aspects of the course. They were also asked to suggest how the course could be improved. Participants' compiled responses appear in Table 3.5, Table 3.6, and Table 3.7.

Table 3.5

Most Valuable Aspects of the Course

Item	Response Rate
Essay writing	80%
Grammar instruction	40%
Group discussion	33%
Student presentations	20%
Peer editing	20%

As shown in Table 3.5, respondents (80%) identified essay writing as the most valuable component of the introductory course. Many (40%) students denoted grammar instruction (mechanics, sentence structure) as most valuable, while some (20%) specified peer editing as most valuable. Since all these items are related to writing skills, respondents clearly recognized the value of the writing component of the course.

Respondents were also asked to identify the least valuable aspects of the course (Table 3.6). Approximately half the participants (53%) specified the unit on Shakespearean drama as least valuable. This response may well be indicative of the difficulty students experienced in understanding and analyzing Shakespeare, as reported in the interview data presented later in this chapter.

Table 3.6

Least Valuable Aspects of the Course

Item	Response Rate
Shakespeare	53%
Discussion	13%
All aspects valuable	33%

Although some students (13%) indicated that discussion was the least valuable course component (Table 3.6), others (33%) determined that discussion was the most valuable component (Table 3.5). These contradictory responses can perhaps be related to students' entry level speaking skills; the more fluent students may have found discussion less effective than the less fluent students who may have perceived a greater need for oral activities. It is noteworthy that a third of the participants (33%) stated that all aspects of the course were valuable. One student commented, "Everything was useful for me. I can't think of more useful things."

Finally, respondents were asked for ways in which the course could be improved. Their recommendations are presented in Table 3.7 by theme and by order of response (high to low).

Table 3.7

Suggestions for Course Improvement

Item	Response Rate
Increase writing component	26%
Increase class discussion	20%
Increase grammar instruction	20%
Extend course duration	20%
Include more reading	13%
Reduce class discussion	13%
Give credit for the course	13%

Even though some respondents (two) believed that there were too many writing assignments, respondents most frequently (26%) suggested that the writing component of the course should be increased, while others (20%) recommended that grammar instruction should be increased. Other students (20%) felt that the course should be extended for a longer period of time, while some participants (13%) stated that the introductory literature course should be a credit course.

As the questionnaire data revealed, the course was generally well received and positively rated by participants. One student expressed the following general comment:

> I think the course was valuable to me for teaching me about Western literature and culture. It has helped me to get an exposure to Western society. I will benefit from what the course has introduced me to for the rest of my life.

Interview Responses

In addition to questionnaires, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant to further probe the effectiveness of the introductory literature course. The two research questions guiding this study served as starting points for discussion:

1. How effective is this course in increasing your confidence to study literature at the university level?
2. How effective is this course in improving your knowledge and skills to study university-level literature?

Analysis of the interviews was performed by reviewing transcripts for topics of interest or concern to the respondents and then grouping the responses according to thematic content. Themes were categorized relative to the research questions and have been reported according to these questions.

Respondents indicated that two main factors had increased their confidence to study literature at the university level: the learning environment and the teaching strategies.

Learning Environment

Most respondents emphasized that the non-threatening classroom atmosphere had greatly contributed to their increased self-confidence. The three items which participants identified as contributing to the low-anxiety classroom were the class size and make-up, the instructor's role as facilitator, and the pace of the course.

First, it was stated that the small size of the class for the introductory course permitted greater student interaction than that typical of large university classes. Two students commented that the introductory activity which called for each person to interview and then introduce another student to the class was effective in establishing a friendly atmosphere. Also, it was stated that since students were asked to explain their reasons for taking the introductory course, respondents realized that they experienced many common problems and consequently they did not feel intimidated by their peers. Because the class was small, students knew each other by name; respondents felt that this further established a sense of camaraderie among participants.

Another important factor was that all class members were ESL students. Generally, these students felt the same reluctance to offer an opinion or to ask a question in a mainstream course; however, in this course, students stated that they were not afraid to make pronunciation errors or to express opinions awkwardly since all participants exhibited similar communication difficulties. One student explained, "I was not afraid of saying what I had to say. Even if I hesitated or said it wrong, the rest of the students didn't laugh. The ESL class was so small and you knew everyone, so I guess I had no problem with speaking in the class." Another student stated, "Whenever I made a mistake, I just corrected myself. Some other students made mistakes too, so that was really liberating."

Several students spoke of the instructor's role as facilitator as crucial for building their self-confidence. Respondents described the instructor as "friendly, outgoing, and approachable." They felt that the instructor was "well organized" and that she presented information "slowly and carefully" with "clear explanations." One student commented that the instructor "really cared about our problems with the second language, but in other classes professors just go on and on and never care about us ESL students." Several respondents acknowledged that the instructor had endeavored to make the study of literature comprehensible for ESL students, and had "approached literature in an easier way, so that we at least had a general idea of what was going on."

Other students stressed that the instructor had encouraged them to ask questions and was always "patient" and "understanding" when they needed further explanation. An individual response was that the instructor had facilitated class participation because students were encouraged to express personal opinions: "In this course, we were allowed to give our own opinion. Even if it was not the same as the instructor's opinion, that was O.K." Respondents also indicated that clear explanation of literary terminology had given them the confidence to incorporate this vocabulary into both discussion and writing activities. One student stated, "I especially liked that the instructor taught us the vocabulary. For example, I didn't know how to use words like analogy, metaphor, imagery. This was great because I couldn't understand those words in any other English courses that I took before."

Most participants commented on the pace of the introductory course. Although two respondents thought that the course proceeded too slowly, especially in the first semester, most students indicated that the pace of the course was beneficial to ESL students with little or no previous background in the study of English literature. Participants generally emphasized that they had gained confidence from learning sequences presented in "small steps" through which they had developed sophistication in expressing their ideas. An individual response was, "Actually, because the instructor went so slowly, because she explained so clearly, and corrected our mistakes one by one, we had a very clear concept of how to write well." Another student stated that the relaxed pace of the course had provided opportunities for interactive activities uncommon in university classes. He added, "Before this course, I was very confused about literature and I was not sure about some of the topics. But now I think I can do it." Two students further commented that because the introductory course was an extra course, it could not be fast-paced or students would be unable to keep up with the demands of their credit courses.

Teaching Strategies

In their discussions of effective teaching strategies, respondents frequently referred to specific class activities. The activities which respondents perceived as contributing to improved self-confidence appear in Appendix C.

Group discussion was the strategy most frequently denoted as increasing participants' confidence to study literature. Respondents clearly felt that they benefitted from the sharing of interpretations, particularly when they found a text difficult. Small group discussion was specified as especially valuable. One student said, "Discussions were really important because we could exchange our knowledge and learn from each other. Especially for those who were shy and didn't ask many questions in front of the whole class, in group discussions we asked each other." Another student stated, "Maybe the story was very difficult, for example, 'A Rose for Emily' was really hard to understand. But in group discussion, we gathered all our ideas together. That really helped a lot."

Participants generally stated that class or group discussions helped them to clarify their ideas, gave them more confidence to present an opinion, and encouraged them to use literary terminology. One respondent said, "The course gave us class discussion and group discussion. I just felt free to give my ideas and I gained more confidence in that way." Three students who were taking the introductory course concurrently with a first year literature course explained that they had gained sufficient self-confidence to ask questions or to express opinions in their university courses. One student stated, "Actually, I was still a little bit nervous, but I really did it."

Student presentations where individuals were asked to give their insights on a particular text were specified by four participants as another effective teaching strategy. Respondents commented that listening to the perceptions of others helped their understanding of a text and promoted understanding of the elements of fiction such as "point of view, characterization, theme, and so on." An individual response was, "When I worked by myself, I didn't know if I was right or wrong. When I gave my presentation to the class, there was someone there I could talk to who could give a response back." Another viewpoint was that presentations helped students understand a text on the interpretive level. One student explained that Western literature described "the activity inside your mind -- mental feelings and self-consciousness" rather than dealing with factual information. Hence, he found the interpretive nature of literature "difficult" and "foreign" and felt that student presentations helped him "to understand and get used to this kind of literature."

Several respondents indicated that study guides which gave a series of questions to answer helped them to categorize information and gave them confidence to prepare logically organized essays. These handouts appeared to be especially beneficial for those students who expressed concern about their inability to organize an essay before taking the course. One student commented that she felt "more comfortable" preparing an essay outline with the help of a study guide. Another student stated that it was "less threatening" when an essay was not "just one attempt", and that study guides helped her "to absorb and organize what had been discussed in class." Others expressed appreciation for "clear guidelines" which helped them to formulate responses.

In addition, pre-writing activities such as free writing, brainstorming, write-before-you-read, and pre-writing portfolios were denoted as improving students' confidence to approach the writing task. Respondents pointed out that during these activities they had benefitted by "learning from others," from "sharing ideas," and from "organizing information." Others recognized the value of collecting the information from such activities into pre-writing portfolios which they utilized to limit a topic and to generate ideas for first essay drafts. Individual comments included, "these activities were so good to give me ideas of what to write about," and "they helped me to have a really good understanding of a text."

Keeping literary journals was also specified as effective in developing students' confidence to interpret a text. One participant remarked that as a foreign student studying in Canada he had little knowledge of Western culture "which is totally different from our native culture." This student felt that journal entries had helped his understanding of "people's daily lives, daily feelings, daily actions, their loves and their hates." Another participant pointed out that he had felt "very afraid" of studying university literature courses, but after taking the ESL course he felt more confident that he could identify "the social and emotional meanings" of a text.

Several respondents also commented on the teaching strategy of group composition. Responses on this activity were varied. Three participants expressed dissatisfaction with group composition. As one student stated, "I think it took too much time and it was hard to cooperate in a group because people have different writing styles. I think it was better to have discussion first and then write our own essays." On the other hand, some students felt that this activity where they worked in small groups to prepare a joint first essay draft had given them reassurance. One respondent reported that group composition gave him "a chance to argue and use my vocabulary." Others indicated that they gained confidence from the support of the group since they "all got involved together" and "argued about the best way to organize ideas." Although one participant found it frustrating to write a group essay when several students had different ideas, he stated he felt confident he could "write a really good essay" after this activity.

Conversely, the course unit on Shakespearean drama elicited many negative comments and respondents identified this unit as a weakness of the introductory course. Most students felt that they had not gained confidence in studying this genre. Some participants thought the play was too difficult to understand even on the literal level and did not find recorded dramatic readings useful. Although students were shown a video recording of the drama, most found the video very difficult also. One student stated, "I could only understand a little bit of the text, and I couldn't understand the video at all." On the other hand, three students felt the video had helped their understanding of the play "a little." Some participants found watching a film strip helpful, but generally students expressed little understanding of the drama and consequently lacked confidence to approach the written assignment. One respondent expressed the following thoughtful suggestion, "The course must include Shakespeare, but maybe the instructor can pick up just part of a play and concentrate on that part. I don't think she can do a whole play. It's just too long and too difficult for ESL students, especially for a non-credit course."

Another important consideration for participants in the introductory course was students' time availability. Since ten students were also taking a full program of five credit courses, the introductory literature course necessitated that their school day be lengthened and required additional homework assignments. These demands posed problems for some respondents who felt extremely pressured with the additional course. One student who had taken a university literature course concurrently with the introductory course said, "I think it would have been much better if I had taken this course before I took a university literature course. I found it very hard to handle five credit courses and then one more English course." Another participant who had taken the two literature courses concurrently strongly believed that the consequent combined seven hours of class time devoted to literature was excessive and placed unfair demands on ESL students. Even so, this student determined that the introductory course was essential for ESL students to successfully complete a first year literature course.

Because five participants had taken the introductory course concurrently with a first year literature course, the researcher took the opportunity to probe students' perceptions of the value of taking the two courses together. One respondent strongly believed that he should have taken the ESL course before he had taken the first year university course. He explained, "It took a lot of time to take both English courses at the same time. Besides, if I had taken the ESL course first, I would have had the general knowledge I needed for the university course." Another student reported that because of the demands of the two English courses, he had fallen behind with assignments for other classes and was afraid that his semester results would be poor.

In contrast, other respondents commented favourably on taking the two courses concurrently. One participant stated, "If you were doing both courses, after the day class you could go to the night class and find your mistakes right away, so you could learn from the night class what you did wrong and how to write a better essay next time." Another student felt that participants who took the introductory course first would forget what they had learned or lose relevant notes and handouts by the time they registered in a university literature course. A third comment was, "I think it was good to take both courses together. But if you take them at the same time you have to be pretty sure that you can handle an awful lot of work."

Finally, some respondents pointed out that first year literature courses were intended for students who had previously completed matriculation English classes. Therefore, for those students who had not taken high school English classes, university professors assumed knowledge that many ESL students did not have. An individual comment was, "The introductory course is essential to bridge big gaps in our knowledge." One respondent who had previously completed high school matriculation English commented, "As a matter of fact, most of the materials in the ESL course I have learned before, but the course gave me a good review and I have become more sophisticated and more confident." Another participant pointed out, "If we want to study further we know how. We have gained a feel for English literature -- a general understanding."

General comments on the effectiveness of the introductory course to increase confidence in the university-level study of literature were largely positive. Respondents indicated that they had all gained self-confidence to some extent, although one student stated he had gained "a little bit of confidence, but not that much." Two participants felt that the course would be more effective if it were extended over a longer time period. Individual comments were, "Longer is better than faster," and "We could have started the course maybe two weeks earlier and run two weeks longer. That would have given me another month of classes." Another student suggested that 90 minute classes should be held three times weekly rather than 120 minute classes bi-weekly so that participants could return home earlier in the evening and consequently have more time to work on assignments.

The second interview question asked participants to comment on the effectiveness of the introductory course in terms of their perceived improvement in the knowledge and skills to study university-level literature. Responses were classified according to the language skills of writing, reading, listening and speaking and have been presented in these categories.

Writing Skills

All students perceived that the writing component of the course had been effective in improving their abilities to write a clear, concise literary analysis essay. Students generally felt that they had little mastery of essay structure or organization before they took the introductory course. One student stated, "Before I began this course, I hated to write even a short essay or a paragraph in English because I knew I made a fool of myself." Another respondent said, "All I knew was an essay consisted of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, but I didn't know how to write it." In addition, the five participants taking the introductory course concurrently with a university literature course all indicated that they had registered in the ESL course specifically to improve their writing skills. These students stated that because of the skills they had gained in the introductory course, they had improved their grades in the first year university course.

Respondents identified several techniques they considered effective in improving their writing ability. First, the practice of breaking down a critical analysis essay into its component parts and then dealing with each part in a series of small steps was determined to be particularly valuable. One student reported, "This was quite impressive for me. I learned how to write down ideas for the thesis, how to write a thesis, how to write an introduction. Before this, I really couldn't understand how to begin, how to narrow down to a thesis sentence." Another student stated, "I have a scientific mind, so learning step by step was logical to me and helped me to organize my essays."

Students also pointed out that activities such as evaluating model essays had helped them recognize the relationship between a thesis statement and topic sentences and had helped them improve the cohesiveness of their own essays. One student said, "I didn't know anything about the body paragraphs at all. I mean, how I need a topic sentence that connects back to the thesis; that was really well explained. I needed that." Similarly, activities where introductions or conclusions of model essays had been deleted and students were required to write the missing component were stated to be useful in improving writing weaknesses. An individual comment was, "I learned to write an essay in little steps. Now, I have really improved my writing, even when writing my exams."

Participants also stated that reading model essays and analyzing the writer's organization and development had helped them to limit and develop a topic. Three respondents explained that because they analyzed well developed model essays and examined "why they were good essays" they had learned how to incorporate textual evidence as well as "how to develop paragraphs properly." One participant commented, "You have to learn from the very beginning how to write an introduction, then good body paragraphs, and then the conclusion. So I think it was very helpful to look at good essays. I know for myself that I have improved a lot in writing."

Likewise, the respondents indicated that providing them with photocopies of a first essay draft written by a class member focussed respondents on areas for revision and helped them identify strengths and weaknesses in peers' essays. Several students stated that this activity gave them the opportunity "to learn from others," "to see how others get along," and "to learn how to be more effective, more concise." Two students thought that they had learned to improve their writing by looking at the weaknesses of others. Some respondents also indicated that the related technique of the instructor writing with students while completing in-class assignments and then displaying her work on an overhead transparency had helped them understand how to approach and develop a topic as well as demonstrated the revision process.

In addition, editing essay drafts in groups, using peer editing where students worked in pairs while proofreading each other's assignments, encouraging students to read their work aloud, and praising what students did well rather than focussing on errors were detailed as techniques which respondents felt had improved the quality of their writing. An individual comment was, "I think these things are essential. You can't just tell students to write from top to bottom. They're not organized. They don't know what a good essay means."

Although one student disagreed with the practice of writing multiple essay drafts, most participants stressed that feedback from the instructor and/or peers responding to problems of organization and content helped them reshape early drafts. As one participant explained, "If my professor returns my essay with just a 4 or something, and says 'the essay is poorly organized,' then I don't know how I should improve it. In this course, we learned how to make our essays better." Furthermore, several students suggested that there should be more than one writing task for each text studied. They felt strongly that "writing was the most important thing" and that the emphasis on written assignments in the introductory course should be even greater. One student said, "I can't learn anything from theory. I have to practice over and over."

Regarding the effectiveness of the writing component of the introductory course, one participant stressed that even though she had completed four highschool English classes in Canada, no one had ever taught her how to structure an essay. Moreover, she expressed similar frustration with her university professor:

> I go to my prof almost on my knees and crying. Tell me, please tell me how to write a good essay. What am I doing wrong? You're saying it's not organized, but where did I not organize it? They don't tell you why. They don't show you how. For the first time, this course taught me how I should organize, how I should structure each part. Finally. Now I understand, and I can do it.

Most respondents reacted positively to the grammar they had been taught in the introductory course and believed that they had reduced mechanical errors in their writing. Students clearly determined that grammatical inaccuracy was a weakness they must overcome to be successful in a first year literature course. One student believed that mechanical correctness was the most important requirement to pass such courses: "I think if the grammar is O.K., if you can write fluently without too many errors, you can get a 5 or a 6 in a university course. If you have great ideas, then you can get an 8, maybe a 9. So if you want only to pass a course, grammar is essential." Another student similarly believed that his university literature professor was primarily concerned with mechanics rather than content because when this student's essays were returned, he "got all those circles in the grammar and maybe only one or two comments about the content."

Grammar instruction related to examples taken from students' writing, proofreading in pairs, addressing sentence structure errors within a written context, and reading assignments aloud were attributed to improving participants' mechanical accuracy. One student recognized the limited value of grammatical exercises divorced from the writing process. She commented, "Actually, doing grammatical exercises and writing good essays are two completely different things. You can do really well on the exercise and you can still fail on your essay. So I think it's better to take real examples from essays to learn grammar." Another respondent said, "The most valuable part of the course was the grammar instruction -- sentence structure, punctuation, transitions, and improving our choppy sentences." Even so, participants repeatedly suggested that the instructor should "increase the grammar" and "concentrate more on sentence structure and grammar."

Reading Skills

Several respondents indicated that preparing plot diagrams in pairs or small groups and then comparing diagrams with others' taught them to identify the elements of plot and familiarized them with literary terminology such as setting, climax, resolution and theme. It was stated that this visual representation of the elements of plot encouraged students to expand their vocabularies and helped them to investigate themes. One student explained, "I knew the words but I totally didn't understand the meaning behind the words.

Although this is very simple, it was a very big problem for me. Plot diagrams let me see the meaning. Before, I couldn't find the underlying meaning at all."

Participants denoted techniques which had improved both reading speed and comprehension; these techniques were using context to guess the meaning of unknown words, and reading for general understanding and main ideas rather than being preoccupied with understanding every word in a text. One student reported, "that's [reading for main ideas] such a good strategy, especially when you're reading a novel. It's very frustrating to use your dictionary all the time." Two other students indicated that they had begun to read English literature for pleasure. One respondent said, "At first, my reading was very very slow, but now I can read much faster. I seldom check the dictionary; that's why." Another student stated, "Now that I have begun to understand it, I like reading literature a lot. Actually, I just finished The Great Gatsby and two nights ago, I started Pride and Prejudice."

While several participants recommended that more short stories should be included in the introductory course, others felt that the amount and level of difficulty of texts was appropriate. Most students indicated that reading texts were challenging but not too difficult. (The notable exception to this general comment, as previously reported, was the Shakespearean drama which all students felt was too difficult to comprehend). Respondents generally believed that they had improved their reading skills and felt they had learned "what to look for" when reading literature.

Listening and Speaking Skills

Class and group discussions were frequently cited as being effective in improving communication skills. Learning literary terminology within a context was also specified as an effective means of improving students' understanding of the vocabulary used in writing and speaking about literature. One student commented that he had improved his group communication skills as well as his ability to express his ideas: "I learned how to talk about what I learned from the story." Another participant explained, "I was so weak in vocabulary, I could not use words like enigmatic and macabre that the course taught us."

Some students stated that learning efficient note-taking skills had developed their ability to take lecture notes but others still experienced difficulty in this area. One student said, "I could take notes when the instructor gave us a lecture because she explained the overheads very carefully, but the university professors speak more quickly. I can't write notes fast enough."

In general, respondents reported that speaking activities in the introductory course had improved both vocabulary and understanding of literary terms. However, most perceived oral activities as an ESL course component rather than having value for university courses. An individual comment was, "It's not necessary for us to speak in credit courses. The professor just gives the lecture and students listen." Nevertheless, some students indicated that speaking activities had helped to improve their writing skills. One participant stated, "When I used to write, even a paragraph, it was so basic. I didn't know what words were necessary for good writing.

Group discussion was really helpful to use the words and understand their meaning."

Overall, the interview data suggested that respondents believed the introductory literature course worthwhile and effective. Although two students felt that they had not improved their writing skills sufficiently to pass a first year literature course, the majority of participants perceived the introductory course to be effective in improving the knowledge and skills necessary to study university-level literature courses.

Several participants indicated that course handouts provided them with useful reference material. Likewise, model essays gave them examples of good critical analysis essays which they could refer to. As one student explained, "When I take my first year literature course, if I forget what I learned, all the information is right there."

All respondents stated that they would recommend the introductory course to others. Individual comments included, "Most definitely. I will strongly recommend other students to take this course if they wish to improve their English," and "This course covered everything that it was necessary for me to learn. I have already recommended it to someone else."

Summary

This chapter discussed information obtained from the two specified data sources: questionnaires and interviews. Data from both sources were analyzed for thematic content and then reported according to the research questions guiding this study.

Data analysis indicated that overall respondents perceived that the course was effective in improving both the confidence and the knowledge and skills needed to study university-level literature. As reported, a low-anxiety learning environment and the instructor's role as facilitator were considered paramount in reducing students' fear of oral communication and promoting the confidence necessary to formulate informed responses to literature. Similarly, small group and class discussions in non-threatening surroundings encouraged peer interaction developing respondents' understanding of literary terminology as well as improving their ability to interpret texts.

Results also revealed that the process oriented approach to writing instruction reduced students' writing apprehension as they experientially gained the knowledge and skills to express themselves in writing with greater sophistication. Respondents clearly felt that they benefitted by taking the introductory course and had found it a worthwhile learning experience.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains four sections: a summary of the study; a summary of the findings; the conclusions drawn from the study; the recommendations for future consideration.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gather information about the effectiveness of a new sheltered content-based course entitled "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" in preparing ESL students for the first year university-level study of literature.

The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How satisfied are the ESL students that the introductory course has given them the knowledge and skills necessary to read, interpret, analyze, and write about literature?
2. What factors contributed to the effectiveness of this course in facilitating students' anticipated ability and confidence in the university-level study of literature?

Since the poor performance of ESL students in university literature courses has been a source of concern for both students taking such courses and professors teaching them, "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" was developed to address students' specific academic needs. This study was designed to provide feedback on students' perceptions of the effectiveness of this course in preparing them for the study of literature at the university level. The framework for the design of the study was the Stake (1967) evaluation model which is comprised of three components: antecedents, transactions, and outcomes. First, antecedents, the events which led to the creation and implementation of the introductory course, were investigated to provide a structured framework for the course. Secondly, examination of transactions provided description of the course as implemented. Finally, an analysis of outcomes explored degrees of satisfaction and perceptions of effectiveness identified by the students participating in the course.

The investigation was a summative evaluation of the course. Three sources of information were used in the study:

1. an examination of events which led to creation and implementation of the course;
2. a questionnaire administered to all students enrolled in the introductory literature course;
3. semi-structured interviews held with all students registered in the introductory course.

The methodology used in conducting this study was designed to provide a full description of the introductory course and to evaluate participants' perceptions of course effectiveness. To this end, the study began with an investigation of the events which led to the creation and implementation of the course. Then, demographic data and student needs were determined by means of a questionnaire administered at the first class meeting of the course. Finally, at the end of the course, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were employed to evaluate students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the introductory course in preparing them for the university-level study of literature.

Data from questionnaires were analyzed in two ways. Responses to closed questions were optically scanned by computer to provide ratings for each item, while responses to open-ended questions were compiled by manual tabulation and analyzed thematically. Analysis of the interviews was performed to identify thematic content. Information derived from both data sources was reported according to the research questions guiding this study.

Summary of the Findings

The development of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" was precipitated by the need for the introductory course identified by both faculty teaching first year literature courses and ESL students taking these courses, as determined by a needs survey conducted September 2 - October 2, 1987.

Insights gained from the needs survey were incorporated with current research related to the teaching of literature in ESL classrooms to define objectives for the new course within the paradigm of a sheltered content-based model of language instruction. Activities were developed to support these objectives, and curriculum design was completed August, 1988. The introductory course was offered for the first time by the English

Language Program (ELP) at the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta October 12, 1988 to March 19, 1989. In order to recruit students, a description of the introductory literature course was added to the ELP brochure and distributed to all ESL students registered in the program. In addition, course descriptions were delivered to the English Department for distribution to all faculty teaching first year literature courses.

As discussed in Chapter 3, after development of test instruments, a placement test was held in August, 1988 to determine students' entry level skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. The overall course objective was for students to develop informed critical responses to literature in order to prepare for university-level literature courses. Thus, the intention was to increase students' knowledge, skills, and confidence to ease the transition from composition courses to first year literature courses.

On October 12, 1988, a questionnaire was administered at the first class meeting to identify student needs, to gather demographic data, and to complement information gained from the needs survey. Data analysis revealed that while all participants had some mastery of writing skills and grammatical elements of English, none had the knowledge, skills, or confidence necessary to acquit themselves well in university-level literature courses. Respondents clearly indicated that they wished to improve the writing, reading, listening and speaking skills necessary to formulate informed responses to literary texts.

Examination of transactions provided a description of the course as implemented. Observations -- questionnaires and interviews -- investigated students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the introductory course. The data were analyzed to evaluate participants' perceived confidence to study university-level literature courses as well as to assess their perceived improvement in the knowledge and skills necessary to study such courses.

An analysis of outcomes reported students' degrees of satisfaction and perceptions of course effectiveness. As discussed in Chapter 4, the four major factors which impacted on respondents' increase in confidence to study literature were the instructor's effectiveness both in manner of instruction and interaction with students, the effectiveness of the course components, the learning environment, and the teaching strategies. The key factors which influenced participants' perceived improvement in their knowledge and skills to study literature were the effectiveness of the introductory course, the strengths and weaknesses of the course, and the perceived improvement in the skills necessary to formulate informed responses to literature.

All students registered in "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" successfully completed the course. Although some respondents indicated that they found the course difficult, and others felt that the course should be extended over a longer time period, there was general agreement that the course was a worthwhile learning experience.

Conclusions

In using the Stake model of evaluation, a comparison of the intents (the objectives of the introductory course) with the observations (students' perceptions of course effectiveness and degrees of satisfaction) suggests that the course may be judged to have been successful in preparing the ESL students to study first year university literature courses. There are several conclusions which may be drawn from the research results.

The first conclusion which can be drawn from the study is that the sheltered content-based model of second language instruction met students' specific academic needs and facilitated language achievement. Closely linking the content materials and the language activities to those required in first year university literature courses was clearly perceived as effective in developing the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to study such courses. Findings of the study support the research (Brinton et al., 1989; Krashen, 1985; Mohan, 1986; Shih, 1986) indicating that content-based approaches to second language instruction best meet the needs of ESL students studying at the postsecondary level.

A second conclusion suggested by the findings is that a learning environment which fosters student confidence is essential to promote favourable attitudes and to reduce anxiety. The sheltered content-based model of instruction which encompasses Krashen's (1985) emphasis of the need for ESL classrooms that "promote low anxiety among students" (p. 32) was also frequently stressed by participants. The findings disclosed that the small segregrated homogeneous class permitted student interaction atypical of large university classes and was an important consideration in establishing camaraderie and promoting self-confidence. Likewise, the sheltered ESL class created a non-threatening environment essential for students to have the confidence necessary to participate in class activities without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. In addition, many respondents specified the instructor's role as facilitator as well as her empathy with and understanding of ESL students as crucial to developing their confidence to respond to literary texts. Thus, the findings support Kidd's (1973) position that students must have a sense of well-being before they will "dare the pain and discomfort that...always accompanies any learning" (p. 120).

Thirdly, it may be concluded that interactive techniques are effective in facilitating understanding, analysis, and synthesis and help students develop the ability to respond thoughtfully to literature. Class or group discussion was the technique most frequently identified as contributing to respondents' increased confidence to study literature. Participants reported that group discussions helped them to express and clarify their ideas, gave them confidence to express their opinions, and encouraged them to use literary terminology. Respondents explained that they benefitted from the sharing of interpretations and perceptions afforded by group discussion and developed the ability to respond to a text on the interpretive and the evaluative levels. Schema theorists similarly advocate reader-centred pedagogy facilitated by the exchange of interpretations and individual responses to a text.

Fourthly, it may be concluded that the process approach to writing appears to contribute greatly to helping students meet the course objectives. The presentation of information in simple small steps was perceived to be the major factor affecting the success of the introductory course. As reported in the literature review and supported by the research, the process approach to writing was of crucial importance to the participants. This approach to writing as a learning process involving a series of overlapping activities including critical thinking, preparing, drafting, refining and rethinking, revising, and editing helped students limit and develop a topic. It also helped them to identify their weaknesses and gain increasing sophistication in expressing and communicating their ideas. Students clearly benefitted from learning sequences which encouraged them to express ideas, feelings, and reactions without being preoccupied with correctness.

As many educators suggest (Connor, 1987; Hamp-Lyons, 1986; Liebman-Kleine, 1986; Santos, 1988), writing should be defined as more than a product to be graded for correctness. Respondents generally denoted pre-writing activities such as freewriting, brainstorming, write-before-you-read, and pre-writing portfolios as improving their confidence to approach the writing task. Similarly, activities identified in the literature such as evaluating model essays, peer editing, discussing successive drafts of the same essay and analyzing the changes that had been made, observing the instructor write and edit her work, and learning to read aloud helped students focus on areas for revision and editing. By writing frequently and extensively about a variety of topics, these ESL students increased their fluency and developed their ability to prepare critical analysis essays with strong statements of theme, appropriate diction, form, organization, and methods of support.

A fifth conclusion is that the problem-solving strategies employed in the course to correct mechanical errors were productive in helping participants overcome grammatical weakness in their writing. The research findings support Liebman-Kleine's (1986) position that mastery of effective writing principles does not come directly from the study of grammatical structures but from the teaching of efficient writing processes. Respondents attributed editing students' work in groups or as a class, incorporating grammar instruction related to students' writing, addressing sentence level errors within a written context, proofreading in pairs, and reading aloud to improving mechanical accuracy. As the literature states, the teaching of formal grammar has either little or negative effect on students' writing if divorced from the writing process, thus "self-correction is the most effective way of extinguishing error" (Wingfield, 1975, p. 313).

A final conclusion suggested by the research is that a complete Shakespearean drama is too difficult both linguistically and culturally for inclusion in an introductory course. When students were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the course, although rated positively in most areas, the Shakespearean drama component was perceived as a weakness. Even though several techniques were employed to facilitate students' understanding of the text, few participants felt that they had improved their confidence or ability to study this genre. The literature points out that "a text which is extremely difficult on either a linguistic or a cultural level will have few benefits" (McKay, 1982, p. 531); even so, university level literature courses require the study of Shakespearean drama. For this reason, an introductory course should expose students to this genre.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research and for future course development are as follows.

Further Research

The recommendations for further research are first, this study should be replicated in other universities or colleges which offer similar introductory literature courses for ESL students to validate the findings. Such replication could include the instructor as a source of data to add the instructor's perceptions of course effectiveness as well as his/her assessment of the degree of students' improved knowledge and skills to study literature at the university level.

Secondly, such a study should be extended to track the performance of ESL students in first year literature courses after they have taken an introductory literature course. A control group of ESL students who have not taken the introductory course should also be monitored while they are taking first year literature courses. A comparison of the performance of students in each group would determine the degree to which an introductory course improves participants' academic performance in university-level literature courses.

Another recommendation is that a similar study should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of an introductory literature course when offered during special sessions. Students should be advised not to take any other course concurrently. (The English Department similarly recommends that students do not take an English course concurrently with any other course during special sessions). Such a study would determine whether participants would derive more benefit from an introductory course without the pressure of concurrent university credit courses.

Finally, it is recommended that a study comparing the content, requirements, assignments, and standards of both an introductory literature course and first year literature courses investigate the plausibility of awarding language credits to participants successfully completing an introductory course.

Program Development

Concerning program development at the University of Alberta, the most important recommendation arising from this study is that decision-makers at the University should reassess the validity of their requirement that ESL students attain six credits (two courses) in English literature. Although it may be argued that an education excluding English literature may impede the full development of the educated mind, it may also be argued that ESL students would benefit more from writing courses based in the content of their specialization areas than from courses in English literature. For example, English 214, the required credit course for engineering students, prepares participants to write technical papers and reports associated with their discipline. Such content-based courses offered by other faculties would develop students' writing skills and prepare them both for their course assignments and for any work at the graduate level.

It is further recommended that university decision-makers should recognize that the degree of difficulty entailed in ESL students completing English literature courses far exceeds that of most of their native English speaking peers. In terms of degree of difficulty, an ESL literature course may be equated to any first year second language course, such as French 200, where students receive language credits after successful course completion. Consequently, ESL students successfully completing an introductory literature course should be awarded language credits which satisfy their English requirement.

Another recommendation is that techniques employed in this introductory course which respondents perceived as effective in improving both their confidence and ability to study literature should be incorporated into first year literature courses. Although lecture delivery is the traditional form of teaching in university literature courses, this does not preclude the pre-reading and pre-writing activities advocated in a reader-centered pedagogy which facilitate students' understanding, interpretation, and analysis of texts. Since many native English speakers also experience difficulty in required literature courses, such inclusions would mutually benefit mainstream and ESL students.

The recommendations for an introductory course are first that the process of curriculum development should continue. Activities for an introductory course could be developed in cooperation with the Department of English to ensure that content, assignments, and standards of the course are compatible with those of first year literature courses. For example, it may be possible for faculty teaching first year literature courses to act as guest speakers who would expose ESL students to mainstream lecture delivery speed and content. It may also be feasible to arrange cross-marking between an English faculty member and the ESL instructor to ensure comparable grading standards.

Secondly, an introductory literature course should be widely advertised on campus to student counselors, advisors, and administrators, and course brochures should be distributed to all faculty teaching first year literature courses to promote awareness of the existence and purpose of an introductory course. During the first offering of the introductory course, several students applied for registration after the closing date for enrollment. Similarly, several faculty members in the Department of English requested information about the introductory course and referred students who were experiencing difficulties in their courses after the closing date for registration. Furthermore, it is recommended that administrators should ensure that the start date for an introductory course allows ample time for faculty teaching first year courses to identify ESL students unable to successfully study literature at the university level. This would entail starting an ESL course approximately four weeks after mainstream credit courses begin so that students who could benefit from an introductory course are given the opportunity to do so.

Thirdly, it is recommended that an introductory course also be offered during spring/summer session so that students have the opportunity to take the course without the pressure of a full load of credit courses. Students should be advised not to take any other course concurrently. Taking an introductory course during special sessions would prepare participants to enter university-level literature courses the following fall semester. Consequently, the improved confidence, knowledge, and skills gained from an introductory course would still be fresh in participants' minds and would most effectively ease the transition from composition courses to literature courses.

Another recommendation is that students registering in an introductory course should be made fully aware of the course requirements and perhaps should be advised to register in a reduced credit load to accommodate the additional course. Some respondents indicated that they benefitted from taking the introductory course concurrently with a university-level literature course, but most respondents felt that the seven hours of class time devoted to English literature placed excessive demands on their time. Although many respondents perceived that the introductory course was most effective when taken prior to a first year literature course, students taking a full five credit course load found that the demands of the additional ESL literature course created great time pressure.

Finally, in order to prepare ESL students for the study of literature at the advanced level, it is recommended that they should be exposed to literature from the intermediate levels of the English Language Program. Reading and responding to simple short stories and poems at lower levels would introduce literary terminology and prepare students for analysis of more difficult texts as they advance through the ESL program. Such an incremental exposure to literature would ease the transition from composition course to literature courses gradually and develop students' vocabulary and background before they attempt a literature course.

In summary, this study has provided some indication of the respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the sheltered content-based literature course in easing the transition from composition courses to first year literature courses. These perceptions should be of interest to those who develop ESL curriculum, those who teach ESL students, and those who counsel ESL students. The study has also provided insights into teaching strategies which were perceived as effective in developing ESL students' informed, critical response to literature as well as strategies perceived as effective in increasing students' confidence in the study of English literature.

These insights provide some understanding of the difficulties faced by ESL students studying English literature at the university level. They also contribute to the body of knowledge concerning both the use of English literature in ESL classrooms and the effectiveness of the sheltered content-based approach to second language instruction.

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APPENDIX A: NEEDS ANALYSIS INSTRUMENTS

Dear Colleague:

We are developing a syllabus for a bridge course which will help prepare English as a Second Language (ESL) students for courses they take in the English Department. To assist us in this project, we would appreciate your view of what ESL students need in order to improve their performance in English 210. These responses will be helpful in the process of syllabus development.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to 234 Corbett Hall by Friday, September 25, 1987; an envelope is included for your convenience. The information you submit will be stricly confidential; the findings of this survey will be forwarded to you once these are available. We greatly appreciate your response.

Silvia Begin
ESL Instructor
English Language Program

Brenda Cunliffe
ESL Instructor
English Language Program

1. a. From your observations, check the reading difficulties experienced by ESL students in dealing with the following genres.

READING DIFFICULTIES	GENRES				
	POEMS	SHORT STORIES	NOVELS	PLAYS	ESSAYS
VOCABULARY					
INTERPRETATION					
COMPREHENSION					
LACK OF CULTURAL EXPOSURE					
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE					

b. What other factors such as inadequate reading speed or lack of library research skills influence the students' reading abilities?

____

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____

____

2. From your experience, what kind of writing difficulties, e.g., idiom, organization or content, do ESL students experience when dealing with the following writing assignments?

take-home assignments

in-class assignments

essay exams

short-answer exams

other (please specify)

3. Some ESL students have difficulties following lectures. From your observations, what factors (general language incompetence, lack of literary background, etc.) contribute to these difficulties in listening comprehension?

____

____

____

4. Some ESL students have difficulties participating in class discussions. In your view, what factors contribute to these difficulties in speaking? Examples may include lack of verbal confidence, non-familiarity with literary analysis and terminology or misinterpretation of lecture material.

____

____

____

5. To what extent does active class participation influence students' final grades? (native speakers and ESL students)

to little or no extent ☐ to some extent ☐ to a great extent ☐

6. Either identify and explain the criteria you use in evaluating students' work,

____

____

____

____

or grade the attached essay and comment on your grading protocol.

7. What were the strengths of those students who passed your course? (native speakers and ESL students)

____

____

____

8. What were the weaknesses of those students who failed your course? (native speakers and ESL students)

____

____

____

9. Do you have any additional comments about difficulties experienced by ESL students who take English 210?

____

____

____

10. If possible, we would appreciate copies of the following:

course description
reading list
take-home and in-class assignments
mid-term examination
final examination

May we contact you in the future regarding this questionnaire?

yes ☐ no ☐

Signature ____________________

Phone ____________________

We greatly appreciate your response and sincerely thank you for your cooperation.

The following in-class essay was written for an English 210 class by an ESL student. The student responded to the question, "Write a critical analysis of Hardy's "Neutral Tones". Your discussion should be concerned with the various elemens of the poem-with form, structure, style and content-and where possible with the relationship between these various elements (750 words)."

One Day, a friend read me a poem. It goes like this:

> The walls are scrubbed
> Until they're gleamed
> Perfect for writing
> I bet you could screamed!

Upon listening to his poem, I was puzzled. It did not make sense to me until he explained to me that he saw this poem on a wall of a washroom. But one may ask: What does this have anything to do with poetry or literature?. The point is, this poem is not a good one if it would been read out of its environment and its context. A good poem is self-explained. It should carries enough details to convey the idea across to its reader. With this point in mind, we then now discuss Thomas Hardy's poem "Neutral Tone".

"Neutral Tone" is a four stanzas poem. Each stanza consists of 4 verses of various length. They are varied from 8 to 11 syllables. The predominant is 10 syllables. Therefore this poem is an iambic pentameter of 4 quatrains. There are 7 different rhymes. Their scheme are abba (day, God, sod, grey), cccc (rove, ago, fro, love), deed (thing, die, thereby, wing), fggf (deceives, me, tree, leaves). Aside from these end-of-sentence rhymes, there are many more secondary rhymes which are sprinkled in almost every verse. These rhymes help to increase the ballad like tone of the poem. Even though the name of the poem is "Neutral Tone" the iambic meter and the rhymes as well as run on lines make it sound more nostalgic ballad like sadness. This tone clearly expressed especially when the poem is read aloud.

Another aspect of the poem is the way Hardy used words to enrich the connotation of the poem, for example: ask; wring with wrong. Ash means what is remained of a burn-out fired, ask also mean the signature, the binding of the love relationship. The man laments that the relationship between them were gone. Hardy employs sad adjective nuns: winter, white, chidden, starving, fallen, ash, grey, rove, tedious, deadest, grin, bitterness, wring, wrong, God, west sun. He also put dreary emphasis on the meaning of words when he incorporate in his poem the use of alliteration. Leaves lay, wring with wrong.

On the structure, the narrator devotes 3 of the four quatrians to recall the past and reflect about his love, the last quatrain is his resolution. The first quatrain he outlines the place and time of the poem. The second and the 3rd quatrain are for action and suspension "Lie and omnious bird a wing". This is the suspension of the poem.

Even though he has a "Neutral Tone" he cannot control his painful feelings: "wring with wrong". The ash tree is what remained now of his love and their relationship. The narrator seems still to live in his past for he spent most part of his poem lamenting about his past. The style, and the content are harmoniously blended. The iambic pentameter quatrain is suitable to express his sorrow, his sad feeling. He saw the white sun and the stagnant pond like his stagnant relationship with his lover. The run on line with end stopped every alternate line is suite to express the sorrow of his story.

One aspect of this poem is its time frame. Reader may have some doubt about the accuracy of the narrator's feeling, since most of the feeling the narrator is talking about is now. He reflects and analizes his feeling on something wich happened years ago. Is his feeling qualify the situation? This is one aspect of the poem which may somewhat lessen the success of the poem.

In conclusion, this is a balance and well controlled poem even though reader may have some doubt about the accuracy of the narrator's feeling. The poem is self-explained. Therefore it is successful in conveying the narrator's idea to the reader. It is self-explained enough to reader as not to lead to misinterpretation of the poem.

Dear Student:

We are developing a syllabus for a bridge course which will help prepare English as a Second Language (ESL) students for English 210. To assist us in this project, we would appreciate your view of what ESL students need in order to improve their performance in English 210.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the English Language Program by Friday, October 2, 1987; an envelope is included for your convenience. The information you submit will be strictly confidential and will help us prepare the bridge course. We greatly appreciate your response.

Silvia Begin
ESL Instructor
English Language Program

Brenda Cunliffe
ESL Instructor
English Language Program

1. a. Please check the reading difficulties you experienced in dealing with the following genres.

READING DIFFICULTIES	GENRES				
	POEMS	SHORT STORIES	NOVELS	PLAYS	ESSAYS
VOCABULARY					
INTERPRETATION					
COMPREHENSION					
LACK OF CULTURAL EXPOSURE					
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE					

b. Do you feel any other factors such as inadequate reading speed or lack of library research skills influenced your reading abilities? (Please specify.)

____

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____

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2. What kind of writing difficulties, for example, idiom, organization, or content, did you experience when dealing with the following writing assignments?

take-home assignments

____

____

____

in-class assignments

____

____

____

essay exams

____

____

____

short-answer exams

____

____

____

other (please specify)

____

____

____

3. a. How much difficulty did you have understanding lectures?

little or no difficulty ☐ some difficulty ☐ great difficulty ☐

b. If you experienced listening comprehension difficulties, what factors, for example, general language incompetence or lack of literary background were problematic?

____

____

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____

4. a. How much did you participate in class discussions?

very little or not at all ☐ somewhat ☐ a great deal ☐

b. If you experienced speaking difficulties, what factors, such as lack of verbal confidence, non-familiarity with literacy analysis and terminology or misinterpretation of lecture material, contributed to this problem?

____

____

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____

5. To what extent do you believe that class participation affected your final grade?

to little or no extent ☐ to some extent ☐ to a great extent ☐

6. a. Did you complete English 210?

yes ☐ no ☐

b. If yes, would you mind writing your grade.

____

c. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your grade in this course? (Please explain.)

____

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____

7. a. If you passed this course, what do you feel helped you succeed?

____

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b. If you failed this course, what do you feel were your weaknesses?

____

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8. Please indicate which of the following English courses you took prior to English 210.

English 10 ☐	English 20 ☐	English 30 ☐
English 13 ☐	English 23 ☐	English 33 ☐

ESL courses taken at the U. of A. (Please specify course name, date, and duration.)

____

____

____

____

9. Did you write the TOEFL before taking English 210?

yes ☐ no ☐

If yes, what was your TOEFL score? ______________

10. Rank the following language skill areas you think most necessary to complete English 210. (1 indicates the area of greatest importance; 4 indicates the area of least importance.)

listening ☐

reading ☐

speaking ☐

writing ☐

11. Do you have any additional comments you believe would benefit students preparing to take English 210?

____

____

____

____

____

12. May we contact you in the future regarding this questionnaire?

yes ☐ no ☐

Signature ______________________

Phone number ______________________

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B: COURSE OUTLINE

Course Name/ Number: #1319 "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students"

Building/ Room Number: Humanities Center, Room 1-3
Oct 12th, 1988 - March 29, 1989
(Semester Break: Dec 8th, 1988 - Jan 3rd, 1989)

Days/Times: Monday / Wednesday 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Instructor: Brenda Cunliffe

COURSE DESCRIPTION

" An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students " is designed for ESL students who have taken writing courses, high school classes or general ESL programs and are entering first year university or registering for college and university level literature courses.

COURSE CONTENT

The course consists of reading and discussion of literary texts, such as short stories, novels, poems and plays. The works discussed are matched closely to the standard university curriculum for introductory literature courses.

In addition to developing a variety of levels of response to these texts, students will learn how to prepare, revise and edit critical analysis essays and participate in classroom discussions and presentations.

COURSE AIMS

By the end of this course students will improve the skills necessary to:

1. Develop an analytical, disciplined reading of a text
1.1 Develop a literal response to a text
1.2 Develop and inferential response to a text
1.3 Develop an evaluative response to a text

2. Develop the skills necessary to write a critical literary analysis essay
2.1 Clarify and limit a subject to a workable topic
2.2 Prepare a critical analysis essay
2.3 Revise and edit essay drafts

3. Formulate an oral response to literature
3.1 Interpret lectures
3.2 Participate in class discussions and presentations

COURSE ORGANIZATION

1. Lectures, aural and oral activities, films, guest speakers
2. Class and group discussions
3. Writing and reading assignments, in-class and homework
4. Group or individual presentations
5. Literary journal writing

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/ ASSESSMENTS

1.	Mid-term examination	10%
2.	Final examination	20%
3.	Research paper	10%
4.	In-class and homework assignments	60%

REFERENCES

Scholes, R., Comely, N.R., Klaus, C.H., Staines, D., Elements of Literature. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Guest, Judith, Ordinary People, New York: Ballantine Books, 1982.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Student Handout

Literary Criticism

Analysis and Explication

Purpose of Literary Criticism:

1. to explain what you have discovered in a *critical* reading of a particular work
2. to interpret the *meaning* of the work by subjecting its technique either to *explication* or to analysis

Explication:

1. a method of literary criticism involving a *close* and *systematic* examination of specific elements in a poem

2. usually follows a sequential development, beginning with the first line and ending with the last

3. in short works, you can examine *key* aspects of the *whole* work; in longer works, you can examine only a key passage or passages

4. the goal of explication is to explain the *deeper relationships* and *meanings* of each individual part of a work, and subsequently of the work as a whole

5. Explication is *not* to be confused with *paraphrase.* (Paraphrase--a summary of action or situation--is the surface or literal dramatic experience readers can give after their first reading).

Critical Analysis:

1. A plot *summary* begins with *no thesis* or point of view; it merely recapitulates the facts.

2. A critical analysis, on the other hand, *takes a viewpoint* and *attempts to prove its validity;* its object is to help the readers make better sense of something they are *already* familiar with.

3. The critic's job is to *explain and evaluate*--that is, to bring the reader to a better understanding of the subject. Clearly a writer cannot do this if the critic assumes that the reader is completely ignorant of the subject.

4. Pursuit of *textual* evidence: you will always be using those details *to demonstrate a point*. (In other words, it is their *larger significance* that always concerns you, not the details for their own sake. They are *illustrations* of something--a recurring pattern, a character trait, etc.)

5. Get into the habit of thinking in terms of *how* and *why* questions; these are the questions that a critical analysis usually deals with. They are more intrinsically interesting than *what* questions because they are *interpretative* rather than descriptive.

6. Pay close attention to the *form* of the work.

7. Use the present tense. This is partly because of the force of convention and partly because dramatic characters are considered as "alive" now as when they were first conceived. This convention usually applies to authors, too: say "Dickens observes," *not* "Dickens observed."

8. Analyzing a work is a *means* toward appreciation and evaluation, not an end in itself.

Recommended Reference Material:

1. a handbook of literary terms

2. a handbook of English composition and grammar

3. an English/English dictionary

4. a thesaurus

5. a style manual, preferably the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*

Activity 2: **Literary Journals**

Intermediate Objectives:

R1 - To develop a literal response to a text
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Writing literary journals encourages an uninhibited, personal response to literature.

Activity: Many students will be familiar with keeping diaries or journals. Literary journal entries should be recorded in a separate notebook and used to record students' impressions and responses to texts. Entries should be written both while students are reading a text and after reading has been completed. Students concentrate on personal literary responses, without focussing on grammar or form, and record their likes, dislikes, and uncertainties. They should comment on plot, characterization, theme, tone, etc., note any prominent features of the work and note any questions they wish to ask. After reading a text, students note their impressions of the work as a whole.

Literary journals are used to promote class discussion, where students exchange and discuss their perceptions and raise questions about uncertainties.

Students add notes to their journals during discussions or presentations. Literary journals provide material which will be used later for critical essays.

Activity 4: **Freewriting**

Intermediate Objectives:

W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Freewriting demands that students think and write under time pressure, and is recommended to help students overcome writing barriers.

Activity:

1. Students are asked to write nonstop for a period of ten minutes (or longer) on one of the following topics:

   A. Why I am taking this course

   B. The literary genre I enjoy most

   C. The literary genre I dislike most

   D. The most interesting novel I have read

   E. The best play I have seen

   F. The best movie I have seen

   G. Why I like/dislike poetry

   H. The value of studying literature

2. Students are then asked to share their writing with the class.

3. This activity should be repeated several times in the early stages of the course to help students overcome writers' block.

4. After student have experienced free-writing several times, they should begin focussed free-writing.

Activity 5: **Focussed Freewriting**

Intermediate Objectives:

W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Students will have to write responses to literature in examinations. Focussed freewriting demands that students think and write about a literary topic under time pressure.

Activity: The technique of freewriting is refined into focussed freewriting, which allows students to express uninhibited conscious and unconscious responses to a text.

1. Students are asked to write nonstop for ten minutes (or longer) on a particular literary text, or some aspect of a text. Students should concentrate on personal response without stopping to organize, correct or evaluate their responses; sentences may be fragmentary and single words may be used to indicate ideas.

2. Students should present and discuss their responses to investigate possible themes for critical essays.

3. Students should take notes of ideas and perceptions raised during presentations and discussions.

Activity 6: Brainstorming

Intermediate Objectives:

W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Brainstorming is a technique which stimulates thinking and generates ideas.

Activity: Brainstorming requires that students write down, in point form, everything they can think of about a particular literary topic.

1. Students begin by writing the specified topic in the middle of a page and then noting all ideas which occur to them; no ideas are discarded or edited no matter how obvious or bizarre they may appear. The result of brainstorming will be a mixture of generalizations and details evolving from a central topic.

2. Students then draw lines to connect and categorize related points and determine a focus for critical essays.

3. Students may brainstorm individually, in groups or as a class. Flip-charts or overhead transparencies should be provided for group brainstorming.

4. Each group then presents its results to the class for discussion.

5. Students should take notes of ideas and perceptions raised during presentations and discussions.

Activity 7: **Tree diagraming**

Intermediate Objectives:

W1 - To clarify and limit a topic to a workable topic
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay

Purpose: Tree diagraming is a technique which stimulates thinking and generates ideas. It is also useful for narrowing a topic and for developing categories within a theme.

Activity:

1. Students are assigned a broad topic related to a particular literary text.

2. They are then asked to generate ideas by thinking of categories and subcategories of the topic as limbs of a tree which branch out from the central topic.

3. Students share their individual or group tree diagrams recorded on overhead transparencies or flip-charts. The class discusses each group's tree diagram and expands or limits the categories the group has developed.

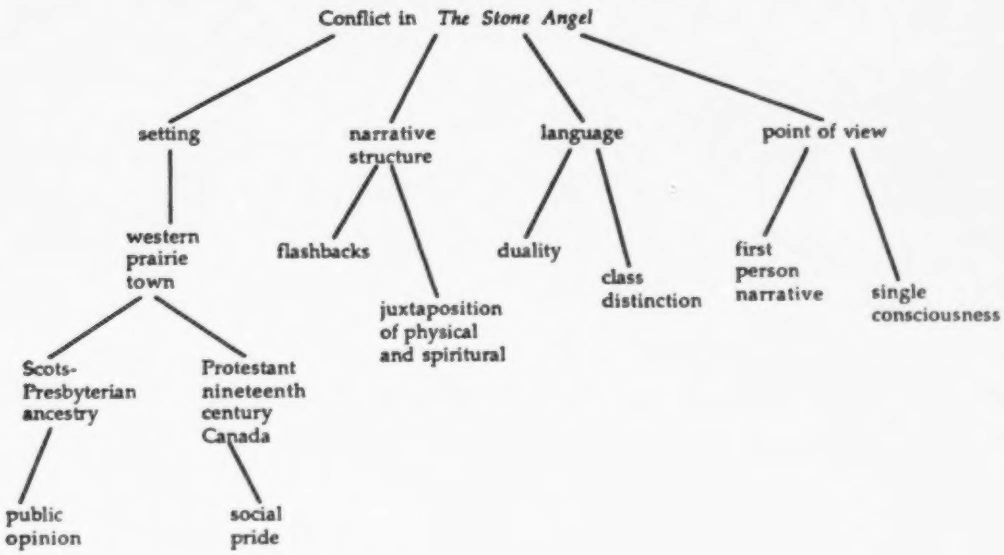
4. Students should take notes of ideas and perceptions raised during presentations and discussions.

Example: Students are assigned the broad topic of conflict in Margaret Lawrence's novel, *The Stone Angel*

A tree diagram which may result from this general theme is as follows:

Student Handout:

TREE DIAGRAM


Conflict in *The Stone Angel*
setting
narrative structure
language
point of view
western prairie town
flashbacks
juxtaposition of physical and spiritural
duality
class distinction
first person narrative
single consciousness
Scots-Presbyterian ancestry
Protestant nineteenth century Canada
public opinion
social pride

Activity 10: Categorizing Textual Analysis II (Fiction)

Intermediate Objective:

R1 - To develop a literal response to a text
R2 - To develop an inferential response to a text
R3 - To develop an evaluative response to a text
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Asking appropriate questions helps students discover meaning and organize material into categories.

Activity A:

1. Students are encouraged to explore a wide range of possible responses to fiction by writing answers to the general and special category questions on the handout.

2. Students are given these questions before they read a particular work of fiction, and keep the questions in mind as they are reading.

3. Each student answers as many questions as possible individually, before working in a small group for discussion and elaboration of answers.

4. Each group presents its answers to the class for further discussion and discovery of meaning.

Activity B: Students are assigned fiction text to read as homework. By answering the questions on the handout students prepare an oral presentation on the particular text.

Activity C:

1. Students are assigned a fiction text to read as homework.

2. Working in small groups, students answer the questions on the handout on an overhead transparency.

3. Each group then presents its perceptions to the class for discussion.

Student Handout

Fiction

1. *Subject*: what is the novel or short story about?

2. *Narrative Structure*: what is the principle behind the selection and arrangement of events ("plot")?

3. *Development*: What are the particular details that give the work substance?
    a) *Setting*: What is the time, place, and social environment within which events take place?
    b) *Characterization*: What are the characters like? What techniques are used to portray them?

4. *Style*: How does the author use the language of the medium?
    a) *Diction*: What do usage level and word choice tell me?
    b) *Images and Symbols*: Do these create patterns of meaning? How?
    c) *Sentence Structure*: What do sentence patterns tell me?

5. *Tone*: What is the author's attitude towards subject and reader, as conveyed by the work?

6. *Point of View*: Who is the narrator? How does this a effect the way the story is told?

7. *Theme*: What is the central idea of the novel of short story?

Adapted from:

Stewart, K.L., Kowler, M.E., Bullock, C. (1985). *Essay writing for Canadian students*, pp 378-379.

Activity 13: Prewriting Portfolio

Intermediate Objectives:

W1 - To clarify and limit a topic to a workable topic
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay

Purpose: Students examine materials in their prewriting portfolios in order to formulate first critical essay drafts.

Activity:

1. Students collect materials from lectures, prewriting activities, prereading activities, notes resulting from class or group discussions and presentations in a prewriting portfolio.

2. The material in the portfolio provides tangible information which can be utilized to limit a topic, find a theme, and generate ideas for first essay drafts.

Activity 15: **Sentence Outlining**

Intermediate Objectives:

Activity A:

W1 - To clarify and limit a topic to a workable topic
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay

Activity B:

W1 - To clarify and limit a topic to a workable topic
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: A sentence outline--one in which each entry is written in sentence form--is more complete than a point outline composed simply of words or phrases. By writing a sentence outline, students are compelled to articulate complete ideas.

Activity A:

1. After prewriting activities, students should identify the audience and purpose for the writing assignment, and then prepare a sentence outline.

2. Students should begin the outline by writing a thesis statement, followed by the support in a logical order, and the conclusion. The outline provides a blueprint of what will be written; it classifies the parts of the essay and keeps the organization clear.

Activity B:

1. Working in groups, students break down the sample essays included in the appendix (or any other model essays) into sentence outline form on overhead transparencies.

2. The instructor discusses each transpar-ency with the class as a whole.

Note: Model essays suitable for this activity can be found in the two following publications:

Conrad, R. (1983).*The act of writing: Canadian essays for composition.*

Eastman, A.M., (Ed.) (1984). *The Norton Reader.*

Student Handout

Sentence Outlining

Example: The following is a sentence outline for an essay which discusses the conflict between pride and love in Margaret Lawrence's *The Stone Angel*.

Thesis: Lawrence uses setting, narrative structure, language, and point of view to develop the novel's major theme: the conflict between pride and love.

I. The setting of Manawaka, Manitoba, indicates the unbending, authoritarian ancestry that dominates Hagar's childhood.
  A. The repressive code of behaviour governs Hagar's life.
    1. Hagar is raised by her father.
    2. Hagar learns to despise softness and femininity.

  B. Hagar shows her dichotomous nature by her decision to marry Bram.
    1. She defies public opinion.
    2. She is unable to show any responsiveness.

  C. Hagar's social pride similarly destroys her relationship with persons.
    1. She deprives Marvin of any love.
    2. She attempts to infuse John with ancestral pride.

II. Lawrence closely interweaves content and narrative structure to show the conflict in Hagar's personality.
  A. Hagar's life unfolds as a series of flashbacks.
  B. The action repeatedly moves between past and present.
  C. The association of ideas leads to the parallel in Hagar's life.

III. The duality of language and dialogue further reflects the dichotomy of Hagar's character.
  A. The cemetery symbolizes the life of respectability.
  B. The wilderness symbolizes Hagar's repressed spirit.

IV. The first person point of view establishes the conflict of love and pride.
  A. Other characters are presented through one consciousness.
  B. Hagar is an old woman exploring her memories.

Activity 16: Transitions

Intermediate Objectives:

Activity A: W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay

Activity B: W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Clear transitions and an appropriate tone can make the difference between an essay which confuses or annoys a reader and one that enlightens and pleases a reader. Clear transitions are therefore necessary for unity and coherence within and between paragraphs.

Activity A:

1. Provide students with a paragraph which has adequate development but no transitions.

2. Students should rewrite the paragraph with a variety of appropriate transitions.

   Example:
   Emily Carr was an artist of international contact, travel and study. She was initially seen simply as a West Coast painter of Indians. Toleration moved to acceptance. She gradually acquired a national critical reputation. She acquired recognition as a great Canadian artist. She remained a non-intellectual. She responded intuitively to the spiritual quality of life. Carr's paintings show how she was able to retreat. Her prose also shows how she was able to retreat. Carr's paintings and her prose express the spirit of nature.

Activity B:

1. Delete all the transitions from a model paragraph of an essay before photo-copying the piece for the students.

2. Students then insert appropriate transitions in the blank spaces.

3. After providing students with copies of the original writing, discuss any differences in students' choices of transitions and the author's choices.

Activity 17: **Thesis Statements**

Intermediate Objectives:

W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Before students begin to write essays, they should work out a thesis statement which focuses the topic.

Activity A:

1. Provide students with the handout.
2. Students work in small groups to discover and discuss whether and why the sentences are suitable thesis statements.
3. The instructor discusses the groups' answers with the class as a whole.

Activity B:

1. Using a model essay, delete the thesis statement before photocopying the essay for the students.
2. Students read the essay carefully, noting the points which have been developed in the essay before writing an appropriate thesis statement. Students may work individually or in groups.
3. Students then present their thesis sentences to the class for discussion and evaluation.
4. Students discover whether the thesis sentences are effective and improve any which are not effective.

Student Handout

Thesis Statements

The thesis statement should do two things: it should make clear what the purpose of the essay will be and it should show what ideas the rest of the essay will be based on. If a thesis statement does not suggest three or four areas that could be logically developed from it, it is either too vague or too narrow. Literary topics usually will be analytical.

According to the preceding criteria, consider the effectiveness of the following sentences as thesis statements for analytical essays. Work in small groups, to discover and discuss whether and why the sentences are suitable thesis statements.

1. *Romeo and Juliet* is the story of two young people who loved each other in spite of the feud between their families.
2. These poems are about beauty.
3. In *Moby Dick*, Melville writes about whaling and also discusses some interesting ideas.
4. The *Book of Job* is concerned with the problem of evil and man's attempt to explain the existence of evil in a world created by a good God.
5. Hagar is an interesting character.
6. Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" and Kafka's "Metamorphosis" both investigate a similar theme.
7. The major conflict in Lawrence's *The Stone Angel* is between pride and love.
8. In the opening passage of *Bleak House*, Dickens skillfully creates the sensations of the all-pervasive, shroud-like fog.
9. In the opening passage of *Bleak House*, Dickens skillfully interrelates sounds, words, and syntax to create the sensations of the all-pervasive, shroud-like fog.
10. In Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily", and Kafka's "Metamorphosis", both authors use metaphor, allegory and enigma to portray their critical questioning of inverted values, confinement and interaction.

Activity 18: **Topic Sentences**

Intermediate Objectives:

W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
W3 - To revise and edit essay drafts
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations.

Purpose: Students must realize the relationship between a thesis statement and topic sentences when writing critical analysis essays.

Activity A: The topic sentence shows what aspect of the central thesis will be developed in the ensuing paragraph. Topic sentences should be logically and coherently organized so that every paragraph contributes to a reader's understanding of an essay's central thesis.

1. Working in small groups, students read, analyze and discuss model essays in the appendix (or other model essays).

2. Each group should identify and record the title, the thesis statement, the topic sentences and the concluding sentence of the essay.

Activity B:

1. Using model essays, delete the topic sentences before photocopying the essay for the students.

2. Students read the essay carefully, noting the points developed in each paragraph, before writing appropriate topic sentences. Students may work individually or in groups.

3. Students then present their topic sentences to the class for discussion and evaluation.

4. Students discover whether their topic sentences are effective and improve any which are not effective.

Student Handout

Logical Development

Title: ______________________________

Thesis: ______________________________

Topic sentence: ______________________________

Topic sentence: ______________________________

Topic sentence: ______________________________

Conclusion: ______________________________

Analyze the essays, and answer these questions:

1. Does the title indicate the essay content?
2. Does the thesis make clear the purpose of the essay?
3. Does the thesis show what ideas the rest of the essay will be based on?
4. Are the topic sentences logically and coherently organized?
5. Does each paragraph contribute to a reader's understanding of the thesis?
6. Does the conclusion round out the writer's argument?
7. What improvements could be made? Why?

Activity 20: **Introductions II**

Intermediate Objective:

Activity A:

R1 = To develop a literal response to a text
R2 = To develop an inferential response to a text
R3 = To develop an evaluative response to a text
W2 = To prepare a critical analysis essay
W3 = To revise and edit essay drafts
O2 = To participate in class discussions and presentations

Activity B:

W2 = To prepare a critical analysis essay
O2 = To participate in class discussions and presentations.

Purpose:

Students should recognize that an introduction is of primary importance; an introduction should capture a reader's attention and interest.

Activity A:

1. Students read "A Dog's Eye View of Man," (p. 272) and "Beer Can, " (p. 274) in *The Norton Reader*.

2. Students read the essay on pages 63 to 65, written in response to the topic: Compare stylistic effect in Thurber's "A Dog's Eye View of Man" and Updike's "Beer Can." Note that the introduction to this essay is missing.

3. Students write an introduction to the essay.

4. Several student introductions are evaluated by the class as a whole; strengths are noted and improvements of weaknesses are made.

5. Students then revise, edit and rewrite their introductions.

Activity B:

1. Students are provided with copies of the writer's introduction to the essay which follows.

2. Students then compare their own introductions with the writer's and discuss and evaluate any differences. Thurber's "A Dog's View of Man" and Updike's "Beer Can"are equally successful in conveying a similar theme: man's preoccupation with progress without apparent justification. Both writers reveal a similar tone of satirical social criticism in depicting the contradictions of human behaviour. However, each writer uses sentence structure, diction, figurative or rhetorical devices, and tone differently to provide an ironic commentary on man's irrational nature.

A Comparison of Stylistic Effect in Thurber's "A Dog's Eye View of Man" and Updike's "Beer Can."

Each author uses sentence structure differently to depict the folly of human behaviour and reveal his derision. Thurber uses the rhetorical questions to set up the point he wishes to develop and long, complex sentences, and distinctive parallelism. Alternately, Updike uses a short, simple sentence to set up the descriptive detail, as well as colloquialisms, and similes to develop his subject. Thurber sets up his implicit theme with an opening periodic sentence; he follows with a long complex sentence listing dog's misfortunes, and by implication, listening man's stupidities. He then uses a simple sentence, followed by the connective "but" to indicate contradiction and emphasize the thesis sentence. Thurber maintains continuity and coherence by the use of the pronouns he and his and by parallel structure at the beginning of successive sentences, such as "He has seen...He has watched...He has observed..." A sentence of coordinate clauses of contradiction organized to reflect the innocent observations of the dog presents the cumulative evidence of man's illogical actions and reveals the author's unstated intention.

On the other hand, Updike begins his passage with an explicit statement of theme and then brings forth the evidence that supports the theme. He uses the brief, simple sentence "Consider the beer can" as a means of emphasis and to set up the descriptive detail which follows. The complex sentences of colloquial, impressionistic detail, such as "Who can forget the small symmetrical thrill of those two triangular punctures, the dainty pffff...the exultation of release," and "A tranquil cylinder of delightfully resonant metal...requiring only the application of a handy gadget freely dispensed by every grocer," evoke a nostalgic regret for what has been replaced and scorn the contemporary state of progress.

The use of diction and figurative or rhetorical devices for stylistic effect further convey the writers' critical attitude towards the disparity between what is and what ought to be. Thurber uses opposite images and diction, such as "benefited immeasurably" and "heavily charged with punishment," "reason" and unreasonable," "destroying the soil in vast areas, and nurturing it in small patches," to give cumulative emphasis to the ultimate contradiction of men who "raise up great cities to heaven and then blow them to hell." Similarly, Updike uses opposing diction and images, such as "gratuitous invention," "negative improvements," "the dainty pffff," and "the shmoo-shaped tab," to indicate disparity. He also uses a succession of similes, such as "as dignified and reassuring as the fire hydrant," and exaggerated diction and images such as "the tugging, bleeding fingers of the thirsty man," to achieve his effect and reveal his critical amusement. In addition, each writer utilizes the rhetorical question for dramatic effect, as well as the subtle irony of context to convey his attitude and to distinguish what he is really saying.

Both authors effectively persuade by satirical appeal in order to show human weakness, but each establishes a different tone. Updike's tone is one of light, witty humour; his way to "thwart progress" is to "Turn the beer can upside down and open the bottom." Man's need for "Progress with an escape hatch" indicates Updike's scornful amusement at man's preoccupation with unjustifiable change. Although Thurber describes man a "laughable," and the dog's views of man as "fun," his descriptions are caustic and his tone is one of mocking resentment towards the disparity between the ideals man professes and the idiocies he practices.

Thus, "A Dog's Eye View of Man" and "Beer Can" are both satirical commentaries on human folly. While Updike mocks unreasoned progress, Thurber decries the irrationality of progress which leads to destruction. Each author effectively uses sentence structure, diction, figurative or rhetorical devices, and tone to convey his attitude toward his subject and to focus on the reader's interpretive responses to discern the social statement.

Activity 23: **Workshop Writing**

Intermediate Objectives:

W1 - To clarify and limit a topic to a workable topic
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
W3 - To revise and edit essay drafts
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Workshop writing promotes interaction among students and is one way for them to make a strong contribution to their own learning.

Activity: A group of three to five students work together to prepare a critical analysis essay from prewriting to revision and editing.

1. Students work together during prewriting activities before preparing individual first essay drafts.

2. The group reads and evaluates these drafts and suggests improvements.

3. Individuals revise first drafts and present revised drafts to the group for evaluation.

4. This process continues until the group is satisfied that the essays are ready for a final draft.

5. Each student then prepares a final draft for instructor evaluation.

Activity 26: Revising Essays

Intermediate Objectives:

W1 - To clarify and limit a topic to a workable topic
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
W3 - To revise and edit essay drafts
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: To demonstrate the revision process so that students realize that most writers do not produce a perfectly polished piece of writing in one draft.

Activity:

1. Students are given a writing assignment and the instructor writes with them.
2. The instructor reproduces his/her first draft on an overhead transparency.
3. The instructor discusses the process followed in exploring the topic and preparing an outline.
4. Students generate as many questions or comments as possible regarding clarity, organization, diction, need for additional information etc. and students observe the instructor revise the original draft.
5. Finally, students revise and edit their own drafts.

Activity 27: **Peer Editing**

Intermediate Objectives:

Activity A:
W1 - To clarify and limit a topic to a workable topic
W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
W3 - To revise and edit essay drafts
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Activity B:
W3 - To revise and edit essay drafts
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: Identifying strengths and weaknesses in peers' essays helps students focus on areas for revision and editing.

Activity A:

1. Students are provided with photocopies of a first essay draft written by a class member. The student's name is removed from the essay and the writer is not identified by the instructor.

2. Working either in groups or as a class, students identify the essay's strengths and weaknesses according to the guide for evaluating essays.

3. Students then revise their own first essay drafts.

Activity B:

1. Students are provided with photocopies of successive drafts of the same essay.

2. Working either in groups or as a class, students analyze and discuss the changes that have been made. Students should discuss whether the weaknesses discovered in early drafts have been eliminated, identify any remaining weaknesses, and suggest improvements.

3. Students then revise their own drafts.

4. This process continues until students are satisfied no further improvements can be made.

5. Final drafts are then prepared for evaluation by the instructor.

Activity 28: Grammar Correction

Intermediate Objectives:

W3 - To revise and edit essay drafts

Purpose: Since grammatical accuracy is expected of students, correcting grammatical errors is part of the editing process.

Activity: Overhead transparencies of students' work are edited by the class. This allows the instructor to identify grammatical errors, and to incorporate grammar instruction which is related to students' writing. Short lessons on aspects of grammar with which several students are having difficulties should be included at an appropriate time in the editing process.

Note: Useful grammatical reference texts are:

Norton, S., Green, B., (1883). *The bare essentials form B*, Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Wilson of Canada Ltd.

Leggett, Mead, and Charvat, (1982) *Handbook for writers*, Englewood Clifts, NJ.: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Activity 35: Write-before-you-read

Intermediate Objectives:

W2 - To prepare a critical analysis essay
R1 - To develop a literal response to a text
R2 - To develop an inferential response to a text
R3 - To develop an evaluative response to a text
O2 - To participate in class discussions and presentations

Purpose: To help students relate textual material to their own knowledge and experience.

Activity:

1. Students write from their own experience about an idea or event contained in the work they are about to read. No reference is made to the text itself at this point. Students write for approximately 10 minutes without focusing on form or mechanics so that priority is given to developing ideas.

2. Students share their writing with the class and discuss the experiences or events they have described.

3. They then read the text. This activity helps them recognize that literary works deal with real, relevant issues that they themselves have experienced and can write about.

The write-before-you-read technique works best if the writing assignment consists of a question which students can easily write in class, even if the assigned reading is complex.

Example: In Sinclair Ross' short story "The Lamp at Noon", the main character, Paul, precipitates his son's death and his wife's insanity by refusing to give up his goal. However, Paul, is not presented as a murderous villain but is clearly admired by Ross for his aspirations, diligence and perseverance. To prepare students to understand this moral ambiguity, before "The Lamp at Noon" is assigned, students write about their own goals and the sacrifices they are willing to make to achieve them.

Writing Assignment:
Describe a goal that you feel you must achieve and the efforts and sacrifices you are willing to make to reach your goal.

Reference: Ross, Sinclair, "The lamp at noon" (pp 482-491). In R Scholes & R. Sullivan (Eds.) (1982). *Elements of fiction*.

Activity 49: **The Short Story (Study Questions)**

Intermediate Objectives:

R1 - To develop a literal response to a text
R2 - To develop an inferential response to a text

Purpose: Through study questions students are able to better focus their attention on specific important elements in the story.

Activity:

1. Students have read "My Kinsmen, Major Molineaux" by Nathaniel Hawthorne in *Elements of Literature* p. 58.
2. Students (working individually, in groups or pairs) discuss the questions and fill in the grids:

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Identify and explain Robin's moral dilemma.

2. a) Describe Robin's strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths	Weaknesses

   b) Explain why Hawthorne chose to create such a character.

3. a) Identify and explain symbolism in the story.

Symbol	What it stands for

b) Do symbols in the story create a pattern of meaning? How?

4. Identify and explain the theme of the story.

APPENDIX D: PLACEMENT TEST INSTRUMENTS

Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (Form R)

Prepared by Corrigan, A., Dobson, B., Kellman, E., Spaan, M., Strowe, L., and Tyma, S. (1979). Testing and Certification Division, University of Michigan: English Language Institute.

The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP), a test of grammar, vocabulary, and reading was used as one part of the official Michigan Test Battery by the English Language Institute Testing Service of the University of Michigan. This form (Form R) of the MTELP is no longer used by the ELI Testing Service.

Students were allowed 75 minutes to finish the test. The test contained 100 items. These were divided into three parts: Part one was a grammar test; Part two was a vocabulary test; and Part three was a test of reading comprehension.

PART I

GRAMMAR

This is a test to show how well you can recognize and use English grammatical structures. Each question in this test is part of a conversation. In each conversation a word (or group of words) is left out. Following the conversation are four choices of words which might be used in the incomplete conversation. You are to select the word (or group of words) which would be used by a speaker of English, and which will best fit into the conversation.

EXAMPLE A:

"What is that thing?"
"That ________ a spider."

a) to call
b) for calling
c) be called
d) is called

The correct English sentence is: "That is called a spider."

To show that d, is called, is the best answer to this example a cross has been made next to d for Example A on the answer sheet.

Answer all the questions of Part I in this manner.
Mark only one answer for each problem.

PART II

VOCABULARY

There are two types of vocabulary items in this test. In the first type you are given a sentence followed by four words or phrases. You are to find the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the underlined word (or words) in the sentence and that could be used in the sentence without changing its meaning greatly.

EXAMPLE B: It's too windy to go for a stroll.

a) swim
b) sail
c) drive
d) walk

The word 'walk' means about the same thing as 'stroll' in this sentence. The sentence "It's too windy to go for a walk," means the same thing as "It's too windy to go for a stroll." To show that d, walk is the correct answer, a cross has been made in the space next to d for Example B on the answer sheet.

In the other type of item you are given a sentence with one word omitted and a list of four words. You are to find the word that would best complete the sentence.

EXAMPLE C: Because of the storm and rough waves, it would be foolish to go out sailing today in a small __________.

a) automobile
b) house
c) boat
d) beast

The word 'boat' fits best in the sentence so that it reads, "Because of the storm and rough waves, it would be foolish to go out sailing today in a small boat." To show that c, boat is the correct answer, a cross has been made in the space next to c for Example C on the answer sheet.

Answer all the questions of Part II in this manner.
Mark only one answer for each problem.

PART III

READING COMPREHENSION

This is a test to show how well you read English. There are several reading passages each followed by some questions about the passage. You should read each passage carefully and then try to answer the questions following that passage. If you do not know the answer at first, you may read the passage again, but do not spend too much time on the passage or you will not have enough time to finish.

EXAMPLE:

While I was getting ready to go to town one morning last week, my wife handed me a little piece of red cloth and asked if I would have time during the day to buy her two yards of cloth like that. I told her I would be glad to do it. And putting the piece of cloth into my pocket, I took the train for town.

D. The person telling the story is . . .

a) a married lady.
b) an unmarried lady.
c) a married man.
d) an unmarried man.

You know that the person telling this story is a married man because he says, ". . . my wife handed me . . ." Because c, a married man is the correct answer, a cross has been made in the space next to c for Example D on the answer sheet.

E. When was the author given a piece of red cloth?

a) In the morning.
b) At noon.
c) In the afternoon.
d) In the evening.

The passage says, ". . . one morning last week, my wife handed me a little piece of red cloth . . ." To show that a, In the morning is the correct answer, a cross has been made in the space next to a for Example E on the answer sheet.

Answer all questions of Part III in this manner.
Mark only one answer for each problem.

Name: ______________________________

Date: _______________________________

Read the following questions carefully. Choose ONE which interests you and respond to it in a well-organized composition. Your composition should be at least 300 words long. It should be written on every second line of the paper. Your handwriting should be clear and legible. You have 75 minutes to complete this task.

Essay Topics

1. Sexually transmitted diseases are a stark reality of contemporary society. What steps must we take, both as individuals and as members of society, to counteract the alarming incidence of such diseases?
2. Finding a good job is not an easy task these days. Jobs are scarce and there is much competition. How does one approach this task?
3. What is the greatest threat to humankind, and what steps can be taken to reduce that threat? Support you conclusions.
4. Which scientific advancement of the past 100 years has had or will have the greatest influence on our society? Give reasons for your choice.
5. What are the qualities of an ideal parent? Support your conclusions.

Interview Questions
(An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students)

1. Education background:
    - What English courses have you taken and where did you take them?
    - What literature courses in your own language?
    - What English literature courses?

2. Present (or proposed) program of study:
    - What is your faculty?
    - What is your specialization?

3. How did you find out about this course?

4. Why do you want to take this course (What do you expect from this course)?

5. Have you ever taken English 210? If yes, what problems did you encounter?

6. What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses in writing English?

7. Have you experienced difficulties in reading English? If yes, what are they?

8. What difficulties have you experienced in learning English as a second language?

9. How long have you been in Canada?

10. Why did you decide to study at the University of Alberta?

APPENDIX E: PLACEMENT TEST ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

PLACEMENT ASSESSMENTS

Prerequisite scores for the introductory literature course were as follows:

1. Michigan – minimum score 70%
2. Essay – minimum score 5 on Caroll's (1980) Writing Assessment Scale
3. Interview – minimum score 6 on Caroll's (1980) Writing Assessment Scale

WRITING ASSESSMENT SCALE*

Band

9 EXPERT WRITER. Writes with authority, accuracy and style. Has a mastery of appropriate and consise English.

8 VERY GOOD WRITER. Clear and logical presentation with accurate language forms and good style. Just the occasional slip or infelicity reveals s/he is not a native writer. Often approaching bi-lingual competence.

7 GOOD WRITER. Can develop a thesis systematically with well-structured main and subordinate themes and relevant supporting detail. Generally accurate and appropriate language, layout and style. Responds to tone or purpose of writing task. Mainly distinguished from Band 8 performer in fluency, accuracy and appropriateness.

6 COMPETENT WRITER. Uses a wide range of skills to convey thesis - presenting it in quite a well-structured fashion, arranging main and supporting themes and details logically. Use of lexis and grammatical patterns reasonably accurate. Slight limitation of style and mastery of appropriate idiom in an otherwise intelligible presentation.

5 MODEST WRITER. Conveys basic information competently, but logical structure of presentation will lack clarity. Work will show several slips and formal errors. Use of style and conveyance of tone is present but not consistent. Essay may well lack interest but the basic message gets through.

4 MARGINAL WRITER. Presentation has coherent appearance and several factual statements can be sequentially made. Work lacks logical structure and use of discourse markers. Often makes lexical and grammatical errors. Uses basic punctuation conventions. Uses restricted range of skills. Will backtrack and may still repeat. Basics theme is conveyed but imperfectly.

3 EXTREMELY LIMITED WRITER. Produces a string of sentences rather than an essay. Some theme but not logically presented. Use of simple sentence structure and restricted lexis with errors and inappropriacies abounding. Main merit is the conveyance of straightforward information.

2 INTERMITTENT WRITER. No working facility; perhaps sporadic uses.

1/0 NON-WRITER. Not able to write.

*Caroll, B.J. Testing Communicative Performance: An Interim Study. Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1980.

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SCALE*

Band

9 EXPERT SPEAKER. Speaks with authority on a variety of topics. Can initiate, expand and develop a theme.

8 VERY GOOD NON-NATIVE SPEAKER. Maintains effectively his own part of a discussion. Initiates, maintains and elaborates as necessary. Reveals humour where needed and responds to attitudinal tones.

7 GOOD SPEAKER. Presents case clearly and logically and can develop the dialogue coherently and constructively. Rather less flexible and fluent that an 8 performer but can respond to main changes of tone or topic. Some hesitation and repetition due to a measure of language restriction but interacts effectively.

6 COMPETENT SPEAKER. Is able to maintain theme of dialogue, to follow topic switches and to use and appreciate main attitude markers. Stumbles and hesitates at times but is reasonably fluent otherwise. Some errors and inappropriate language but these will not impede exchange of views. Shows some independence in discussion with ability to initiate.

5 MODEST SPEAKER. Although gist of dialogue is relevant and can be basically understood, there are noticeable deficiencies in mastery of language patterns and style. Needs to ask for repetition or clarification and similarly to be asked for them. Lacks flexibility and initiative. The interviewer often has to speak rather deliberately. Copes but not with great style or interest.

4 MARGINAL SPEAKER. Can maintain dialogue but in a rather passive manner, rarely taking initiative or guiding the discussion. Has difficulty in following English at normal speed; lacks fluency and probably accuracy in speaking. The dialogue is therefore neither easy nor flowing. Nevertheless, gives the impression that he is in touch with the gist of the dialogue even if not wholly master of it. Marked L1 accent.

3 EXTREMELY LIMITED SPEAKER. Dialogue is a draw-out affair punctuated with hesitations and misunderstandings. Only catches part of normal speech and unable to produce continuous and accurate discours. Basic merit is just hanging on to discussion gist, without making major contribution to it.

2 INTERMITTENT SPEAKER. No working facility; occasional, sporadic communication.

1/0 NON-SPEAKER. Not able to understand and/or speak.

*Caroll, B.J. *Testing Communicative Performance: An Interim Study*. Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1980.

APPENDIX F: STUDENT PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

AN INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE FOR ESL STUDENTS:
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore problematic areas for ESL students studying English literature. Therefore, all questions relate specifically to the study of English literature, and not to difficulties experienced in other courses. Background information is requested to provide a student profile and to determine students' needs.

You do not have to write your name on the questionnaire unless you wish to do so. All responses are strictly confidential.

Please put a question mark (?) where you are unable to answer.

SECTION ONE:

Section one includes questions about possible difficulties in the four language skill areas: reading, writing, listening, speaking.

1. a) Please check (✓) the reading difficulties you experience in dealing with the following genres.

	GENRES					
	POEMS	SHORT STORIES	NOVELS	ESSAYS	PLAYS	SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA
VOCABULARY						
INTERPRETATION						
COMPREHENSION						
LACK OF CULTURAL EXPOSURE						
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE						

Other comments ____

____

____

b) Do you feel that any other factors such as inadequate reading speed influence your reading ability? (Please specify)

2. What kind of writing difficulties, for example, idiom, organization or content, do you experience when dealing with the following writing assignments?

take home assignments

in-class assignments

examinations

other (please specify)

3. a) How much difficulty do you have understanding lectures?

little or no difficulty ______ some difficulty ______

great difficulty ______

b) If you experience listening comprehension difficulties, what factors, for example, general language incompetence or lack of literary background are problematic?

____

____

____

4. a) How much do you participate in class discussions?

very little or not at all _____ some what ______

a great deal ______

b) If you experience speaking difficulties, what factors, such as lack of verbal confidence, misinterpretation of lecture material, non-familiarity with literary terminology, contribute to this problem?

____

____

____

5. Rank the following language skill areas you think most necessary to study literature at the freshman university level. (1 indicates the area of greatest importance; 4 indicates the area of least importance. You may rank two or more skills equally.)

listening ________

reading ________

speaking ________

writing ________

SECTION TWO:

Section two involves questions about your previous education in English as a Second Language.

6. a) Please indicate which of the following English courses you took prior to this course:

English 10 _____ English 20 _____ English 30 _____
English 13 _____ English 23 _____ English 33 _____

Other English courses taken. (Please specify). ___________
____

b) ESL courses taken. (Please specify where you took each course, the year and the duration of the course.)

Name of Institution	Year Taken	Course

c) Did you write the TOEFL before taking this course? ________

If yes, what was your TOEFL score? ________

7. a) What is your native language? ______________________________

b) Have you studied literature in your native language?

Yes ______ No _______

If yes, please specify the level and duration of study. __________________
____

SECTION THREE:

Section three asks you to describe your perceptions of studying English literature. Please answer the questions in this section in paragraph form.

8. a) What do you enjoy most about English literature? Why?

b) What do you dislike most about English literature? Why?

c) What do you hope to gain from this course?

d) Do you have any other comments about studying English literature that you would like to add?

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE CONSENT FORM AND STUDENT EVALUATION

QUESTIONNAIRE AND CONSENT FORM

This questionnaire is to be used as a source of information for a study to evaluate the effectiveness of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" in preparing students for entry into the freshman university-level study of literature.

The questionnaire gives you an opportunity to express your opinions on this course and how it was taught.

You do not have to write your name on the questionnaire. All responses are strictly confidential. Data will be presented in a general manner in the study. All responses which are reported in the study will be presented anonymously. All questionnaires will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

You have the right to opt out of the study, or not respond to any questions. Participation in the study will not affect your final course grade.

Thank you for your help in this study.

Date ______________________ Researcher ______________________

The study has been explained to me and I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I have read the above, understand it, and voluntarily consent to participate in this study under the terms outlined.

Date ______________________ Respondent ______________________

PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB

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THIS AREA

Instructor's name: Brenda Cunliffe

Course/Class: 1319

Requisition # 506289.001

Using an HB pencil, fill in only one circle for each question. Completely erase any response you wish to change.

SD=Strongly disagree D=Disagree N=Neither agree nor disagree A=Agree SA=Strongly agree

		SD	D	N	A	SA
1.	Overall, the instruction was effective.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	The instructor provided an atmosphere conducive to learning.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	The instructor gave clear explanations.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	The instructor made good use of examples and illustrations.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	The instructor presented the material in an interesting and helpful manner.	①	②	③	④	⑤
		SD	D	N	A	SA
6.	The instructor made the course sufficiently challenging.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	The instructor had a good rapport with the class.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	The instructor was willing to meet and help students outside class.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	The instructor provided helpful feedback throughout this course.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10.	The instructor treated students with respect.	①	②	③	④	⑤
		SD	D	N	A	SA
11.	The course was well organized.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12.	The objectives of the course were clearly explained.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13.	The objectives of the course were achieved.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14.	The amount of material covered in the course was reasonable.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15.	Class participation was actively encouraged.	①	②	③	④	⑤
		SD	D	N	A	SA
16.	The level of difficulty of the course material was appropriate.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17.	Assignments were relevant ot what was presented in class.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18.	Assignments were challenging and worthwhile.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19.	Grades were assigned fairly and impartially.	①	②	③	④	⑤
20.	I learned to identify formal characteristics of literary texts.	①	②	③	④	⑤
		SD	D	N	A	SA
21.	I gained a good understanding of concepts/principles in this field.	①	②	③	④	⑤
22.	I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations.	①	②	③	④	⑤
23.	I utilized all the learning opportunities provided in the course.	①	②	③	④	⑤
24.	I would recommend this course to other students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
25.	A real strength of this course was the classroom discussion.	①	②	③	④	⑤
		SD	D	N	A	SA
26.	I developed my ability to communicate about literature.	①	②	③	④	⑤
27.	I developed my ability to read literature.	①	②	③	④	⑤
28.	I developed my ability to write about literature.	①	②	③	④	⑤
29.	I developed more confidence in myself.	①	②	③	④	⑤
		①	②	③	④	⑤

Please use the back of this sheet to respond to the following:

A. How can this course be improved?
B. Which aspects of the course were most valuable?
C. Which aspects of the course were least valuable?
D. Comment on the quality of instruction in this course and any other matter relevant to it. Feel free to expand on your responses to the above questions.

APPENDIX H: CONSENT FORM AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW PROCESS AND CONSENT FORM

This interview is to be used as a source of information for a study to evaluate the effectiveness of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students" in preparing students for entry into the freshman university-level study of literature.

Your responses will be recorded by me in written form and also recorded on tape. Data will be presented in a general manner in the study. All responses which are reported in the study will be presented anonymously. Should I quote you directly in the study, a copy of that quote as it will be reported will be sent to you. All tapes and transcriptions will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

You have the right to opt out of the study, or not respond to any question Participation in the study will not affect your final course grade.

Thank you for your help in this study.

Date	Interviewer

The study has been explained to me and I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I have read the above, understand it, and voluntarily consent to participate in this study under the terms outlined.

Date	Interviewee

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE INTRODUCTORY LITERATURE COURSE

Interview Objectives:

1. To elicit participant perception of "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students."
2. To understand participant perception of effectiveness of this introductory course for increasing confidence in the university-level study of literature.
3. To understand participant perception of effectiveness of this introductory literature course for improving ability in the university-level study of literature.

Interview Schedule:

Participants were interviewed at the end of the introductory course. The interview was semi-structured. Three questions were asked. Any discussion which was relevant to the objectives was pursued within a framework of an informal dialogue. The introductory statement and main questions were as follows:

There has been a recognition of the need for an introductory literature course that prepares ESL students for the university-level study of literature.

1. Describe for me your thoughts and reflections on "An Introduction to Literature for ESL Students."
2. How effective is this introductory course for increasing your confidence to study literature at the university level?
3. How effective is this introductory course for improving your ability to study literature at the university level?